



## OAKLAND RAIDERS TRANSCRIPT

### ASSISTANT HEAD COACH/SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR RICH BISACCIA

**Opening Statement:** "Can I just do one thing before we start with the questions? I just want to give a shout-out to David Gettleman in New York. We all know he's battling cancer right now. He's a real good friend of mine, certainly been a part of the National Football League for a long time. So, a lot of people here certainly know him within the Raiders organization. We're certainly pulling for him and his fight right now. I apologize for letting me do that but thank you very much."

**Q: How would you evaluate your two kickers right now?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Right now it's just going to be an ongoing process. We've been rotating days throughout the majority of the camp and then we've actually kicked them on the same day once before and we were going to do that a little tomorrow. We'll see how that goes. But it's been a good competition. Giorgio [Tavecchio] has been in a league for a while, bounced himself around and really competed his butt off and you know the young guy's [Eddy Piñeiro] got a lot of talent. He hasn't played a lot of football, so it should be a good competition."

**Q: Why is it an effective approach to give each kicker a day to focus on handling the reps?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Well, it's really kind of advantageous to us, because we can have guys kick every single day. If we went on the same day, then that next day then we'd have to have off from field goals. So, it's a little bit of an advantage from us protection wise, but for them they can also gauge their rest period every other day and they can do the same thing throughout the summer. We'd like to try to do the same thing throughout training camp. It's kind of the same way we would do it there in the season. We don't kick two days in a row during the season, so we try to keep the same schedule during the training camp."

**Q: Does the evaluation pick up in preseason or would you like to know before then who your kicker is?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "No, I believe we'll go in through some of the preseason games for sure and give them both an opportunity to kick in game-like situations. We'll try to create as many situations in practice as we possibly can and certainly when we get to pads. So, I think it's a process and everything matters. You know, we do a big 'indy' [individual] set. Giorgio today had 11 kicks before he got over to the team six kicks and he made all 11 and I think he made all six. We came back at the end and he missed those last two, but yesterday there were two big ones just like Eddy kicked and Eddy made one of the two. So, right now they're nip and tuck. When one guy misses two, the other guy makes them all. The next day, that guy misses two and the next guy makes them all. So, it's just one of those deals."

**Q: Does it help having familiar guys such as Keith Smith and Kyle Wilber to help instill your type of attitude and what you like to do?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Yeah, I think it's a big help. The magic word you just said for me is attitude. We have conversations about that constantly in our room. I think attitude is really the main thing for any player, certainly for guys that want to be involved with special teams. You mentioned two guys that have been in my system before or our system before along with Dwayne [Harris] and [Ryan] Switzer] and [Marcus] Gilchrist and Shareece Wright as well. Then my assistant, [assistant special teams] Byron Storer played in this system in Tampa years ago and has coached with me before in Tampa, in San Diego and now here. So, those guys have been through the system. So there are other resources that the players have been



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here or the new ones that we acquired, they can also go to those guys and get some hands on advice about actually how it's done and guys that have done it. So, it's been a big help to us."

**Q: Can you give some detail as to why Storer was the guy that you wanted as your assistant?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Great question about Byron. Byron actually played for us. He's from Modesto and he was walk-on at Cal, became a starter and played in the same backfield as Marshawn [Lynch]. He was a free agent with us in Tampa and became our starting fullback and then went through multiple knee injuries and surgeries twice and was going to get out and go to business school and all of that. I talked him into staying and starting coaching, breaking down film for us and he's actually the guy. I didn't have an assistant ever, and I wasn't a computer guy and I didn't type anything, I did everything hand-written. We won a Super Bowl with no computer pictures and all hand-written words. He's the guy that kind of got on the computer and re-drew everything I had by hand onto the computer and did all of the typing and all the words that I had on paper he'd put them to computer font and those things. So, he kind of revamped the entire playbook and learned how to coach and the system that he was involved in us was kind of natural for him to go on to grasp. When I went to San Diego, I couldn't bring him the first year, they wouldn't let him out of his contract. So I got him the second year and I left after the second year and went to Dallas and they wouldn't let him out of his contract in San Diego to come to Dallas. Then, the next year his Dad kind of got a little bit under the weather and they were starting a new division for their business in San Francisco, so he got out to kind of go work and help his Dad. He really only planned to do it for two years, ended up staying for four and this opportunity got to be where I could get him back and he was ready to leave and the business kind of got put back into position where his Dad could run it again and I had a chance to get him. I got him as soon as I could. He's a brilliant guy, he's unbelievable with players and he's been in the system, so I'm really excited to have him back."

**Q: Does his business background show up in coaching?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Well, I think his work that he did with his Dad's company, dealing with people every day and kind of working his way from the bottom to kind of managing the office, I think you can see a big difference in him, how he's dealing with people and how he's managing things. But for me, on the computer on the drawings, he's been outstanding. And then you look at him, I nicknamed him in Tampa 'Opie.' Everybody remembers R.F.D. and Mayberry and he had that baby face but underneath that baby face he puts the helmet on and he's got some demons in there. You can ask Derrick Brooks and Cato June and those guys. He's a heck of a player, real physical, really bright and I'm excited to have him here."

**Q: Eddy hasn't been kicking footballs too long. How are Piñeiro's mechanics and how much can you work with a kicker's mechanics without making him too uncomfortable?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Great question. The first part of that is, you're right, he hasn't kicked a lot of footballs but he has kicked a lot of soccer balls and my experience being around those guys, they kind of know how to kick. I never proclaim to be a kicking coach in any way, shape or form, so I'm not going to change anyone's kicking style or motion, just like I would not change anyone's throwing motion if I was coaching quarterbacks. But we try to do is we do a lot of film work and we do a lot of meeting time and in that meeting time, they can explain to us what's good about their kick and when it's bad, why it's bad and what's bad. So I can learn a lot about them and help them in the parts that are good and have coaching points about the parts that are bad and not be in a position to change them or to break them down or to rebuild them up into some kind of super kicker. So, I'm really leaning a lot more about Giorgio, about what he thinks is good and bad and a lot more about Eddy, what they think are good and bad. That's really been



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my approach all through coaching the National Football League and I've been around a lot of good kickers; guys I have learned a lot from. I learned a lot from Martin Gramatica, certainly from Dan Bailey and Nate Kaeding and Nick Novak. I've been fortunate to be around a lot of those good players and I've showed those guys' tape of some of those players. They can pull the things out that they think can help them and use them in their style, but we're not going to try to change anyone. We're going to try to let them coach us a little bit and then I can help them on the things that are good and bad according to what they're talking about."

**Q: How has Townsend been holding for a lefty kicker?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Johnny has been outstanding holding for both. I've never really had that before. I haven't had a lefty and a righty before in a camp, so he's been outstanding. When I went to work him out, I asked him to do both. It was pretty natural for him. He's been a catcher his whole life in baseball, so I think he has a little naturalness to him about getting in that kind of awkward position of putting himself in a holder's stance. He's really worked hard at it. He's got over 400 reps just since he's been here on holding for both. I can't explain it. I thought it would be a big issue with it, but it's been an easy transition for him. He's really done a lot of work at it. To some degree that has a little bit to do with the righty and lefty who kicks on one day and who kicks on the other. The lefty is kicking on this particular day, we do all the beginning stuff of all of our work is done for the lefty. Then when he's done with his set, then we'll work the righty. Then we'll flip it when it's Eddy's turn being the righty. He's really done a great job and it's the first time I've had the experience being around a guy flipping and doing both."

**Q: What was it about Johnny that made you think that was your guy, whether it was on his college tape or when you worked him out?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "To some degree, all of the above. We thought he was really athletic on tape. The thing he did really well was direct the ball. He did a good job of putting the ball outside the right numbers and putting the ball outside the left numbers, which is kind of a staple for our scheme, is to be able to direct the ball right and left. We thought he did a really good job with that in college. He was really athletic, and he was really good hand to kick time. So catch to kick, you could kind of see the speed of his hands. I think a lot of that has to do with certainly his baseball background. He's big, physical guy. Again, really athletic. Really good hand time and the ability to direct it. We feel like there's a lot of natural ability there that certainly we're willing to work with."

**Q: How much of a voice did you have in bringing Ryan Switzer here and what do you like about him as a returner?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Love Ryan. My voice isn't very loud, it just goes to the right person or I should say the right two people. We're excited to have Ryan. He's in competition at receiver as well as the return game. He had a good rookie year. He's had some snaps, but he knows he's in a competition both at receiver and the return game. We'll see how it plays out."

**Q: Were you surprised Piñero fell outside of the draft? Gruden said you guys were close to drafting him in the late round.**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "It was certainly a conversation throughout the draft process. We had three kickers, excuse me, three punters rated that we thought would get drafted. It went that way. We had two kickers that we personally thought would get drafted. One got drafted and Eddy was still there. So, we



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feel fortunate that we got a chance to get him, regardless of how we got him. I know coach talked about costing us a lot of money to get him, but we're just glad we got him. It's been a good competition."

**Q: Being a Yankton College alumni, do you feel like you're following Lyle Alzado a little bit?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "In my office there's one Raider picture and it's Lyle Alzado. He's also a fellow New Yorker. A lot of people call it misfit island. It's actually a closed school now, which some people might know. My wife is from out there. She was born in Yankton and she's from South Dakota. It's actually a federal prison now and she said it was always a prison. I don't really believe that. She said even when I was going there. She went to Mount Marty which is another girl's nursing school right there in Yankton. We had the Lyle Alzado weight room in Yankton. His old weights were there. They were tire rims with cement on both sides of a long bar. They didn't have much in the weight facility before we got there, so we kept all that stuff. There was a big painting of him. I became a Raider fan when Lyle Alzado came to the Raiders. Certainly I have a lot of stories from Yankton when he was there. Things he used to do when he went into Nebraska and all. I'm fortunate to be in a building that he walked around in and be with an organization that he helped bring a Super Bowl to."

**Q: Did you work out Townsend the same day you worked out Piñeiro?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "We did. We did. Yeah."

**Q: At any point during that did you think to get them both?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "Again, we all go through the process. I got the chance to work out other kickers and the chance to work out other punters. I think the thing that was impressive for us...I was there with some other coaches from some other teams. The thing that was impressive about Eddy on the workout, it was a real windy day. Eddy came out on the field and we thought he was going to go through this long warm-up process. He kicked about four balls and he looked and said, 'Hey, does that one count?' [We said,] 'Are you ready?' He goes, 'Well yeah, I'm ready.' He just started kicking. It wasn't a long process. Again, maybe to the point that he hasn't played a lot of football. He was ready to go in a hurry. It was an impressive day working. I was there with two other coaches, and I think we all left impressed with both of those guys."

**Q: Are you and Gruden similar as coaches and as people?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** "I will say this. I love Jon Gruden. It's kind of an emotional thing with me when it comes to Coach Gruden because I feel like we've been together for 17 years. We share an early morning philosophy. My dad used to say, 'Every great man has one thing in common, he gets up early.' So we kind of share that. So we've had many conversations at 4:30 in the morning at the other two places I've been since I've left Tampa. Every time I went back to Tampa, my wife stayed there for a long time, I'd go to the FFCA. I'd stop at Dunkin' Donuts, get him his coffee and go in there. He'd put me on the board. I got the chance to watch all the [inaudible] that he had. In my opinion, he's never left football. I'm real fortunate to have the chance to be back with him on the daily basis and to be in the same room. Are we alike some? I sure hope so. I sure hope I'm taking whatever great traits that David Cutcliffe had and whatever great traits that Joe Morrison had and whatever great traits that Tommy West had and Norv Turner, Jason Garrett and whatever great ones that Jon Gruden has. I'm going to do everything I can steal all of that and try to make it part of my coaching philosophy and coaching personality and see if I can become that good of a coach."



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**Q: Is Gruden out here now the same coach you worked with in Tampa Bay?**

**Coach Bisaccia:** “No, I think he’s the same. Maybe more zeal because he’s to some degree had a layoff of being on the grass. But I think people also forget that the first year he was out he was coaching Deuce in high school. He was coaching the offensive line over at Deuce’s high school. My son was playing high school ball up the road, so we’d go and watch. He’s never stopped doing what he’s doing. He went to work at 3:30 or 4:00 in the morning over at the FFCA every single day. Put all the tapes together. Although he’s preparing for a Monday night game, he was really preparing to call the plays at the Monday night game. He gave so much to all those people. So much to all that crew that the ones that listened, I think they got better at being announcers as well. I think he has, if not the same, certainly more zeal than he’s ever had. He’s not going to change who he is. He is who he is. The best part about him is he’s football 24/7. That’s one of the main reasons I want to be around the guy. I think we’re the same when it comes to...we’re husbands, we’re fathers and then we’re football coaches. We really don’t have much of anything else.”

### **K GIORGIO TAVECCHIO**

**Q: What has been the difference in camp this year for you as opposed to last season with Sebastian Janikowski?**

**Tavecchio:** “I don’t know if much has changed. In my mind, I always compete against myself. When I step on the field I try to be and find the best me possible. That’s really where my focus has been this Spring and over the years you kind of know what to expect in the offseason. So, it’s less looking around and more keeping your head down and putting your nose to the ground and trying to improve and find your best every day.”

**Q: You have been the underdog with Janikowski, do you still see yourself as the underdog now and is that helpful to you?**

**Tavecchio:** “Good question. I try not to reflect too much on the situation and where I stand again. I try to keep my eyes and my mind focused on the process. It doesn’t matter who I am or where I am, who I think I might be or who I think the coaches might think that I might be, just try to focus on my process. Again, try to find my best every day, because that’s what this team needs.”

**Q: How do you like the structure of having an on-day and off-day kicking while you rotate with Eddy Piñeiro?**

**Tavecchio:** “I appreciate having a day to yourself, because you mentally stepping on the field it’s all you. You don’t have to worry about splitting reps. I think it’s also easier for Johnny [Townsend] because you can focus on one kicker at a time, so to speak, and we can get a lot of work in on that day.”

**Q: Is there an adjustment for you getting used to a new holder?**

**Tavecchio:** “Yeah, there’s always an adjustment period. It’s, in my opinion, a lot of it has to do with trusting him as a person. Over the past month-and-a-half I have gotten to know Johnny and respect him as a man. As you guys will come to find, he’s an incredibly hard worker, which I really appreciate. So, he’s done a good job learning and honing on holding for a lefty.”

**Q: How does a kicker get to know his holder?**



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**Tavecchio:** "Coffee. (*laughter*) Spend time together. Try to spend as much time with him as possible, spend some time together outside of the facility taking him to some of my favorite spots. So, just try to get to know him on a more personal level and obviously we have a lot of time here at the building, obviously within the constraints of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement] CBA, (*laughter*) and just spend a lot of time together."

**Q: Bisaccia thought it would be an issue having a right-foot kicker and a left-foot kicker while having a holder that was going to have to go back and forth and soon discovered it was not an issue at all. Does that surprise you with how smoothly Townsend has done that?**

**Tavecchio:** "That's why I call him Captain America. (*laughter*) Nice kid, good looking dude, can do a little bit of everything. I think it's just a testament of his attitude towards things. He's really eager to please and to work hard and I appreciate his work ethic, because he's really put in a lot of work and it's not easy. A lot of people might not realize it's like doing a single leg squat every time you get up and down from that position. We've done a lot of reps on both side, so it puts a lot of strain on his body but he's eager and willing to do it, which from a kicking standpoint is really appreciated."

**Q: Do you try to be a help to Piñeiro because he has not been kicking all that long even though, in a sense, he is aiming for your job?**

**Tavecchio:** "Yeah. I try to be the best person possible, too. I think for me, this is obviously a pretty intimate journey, so I don't keep people out, I don't try to beat people down. I'm here to serve. That's my mentality. Directly or indirectly, I think I have transmitted a good amount to Eddy and I hope it's all been positive."

**Q: How has the adjustment period been having a new long snapper, holder and new special teams coach?**

**Tavecchio:** "It's been fine. I really appreciate Coach Bisaccia and his work ethic. I think he really challenges us to be the best we can be and I really get the feeling that he truly cares beyond just the player, but also a little bit of the person too. I have appreciated him challenging me to continue to improve, to continue to grow and that attitude, that competitiveness, that desire to improve is contagious. I think our group has done a great job of that over the course of the Spring. I can't speak highly enough of Andrew DePaola, he's got a beautiful last name, as does Bisaccia. (*laughter*) I really appreciated that and getting to know him, he's been a great support, a great snapper and I really enjoy spending time with him and in particular outside the facility. So, the more time we spend time together, which I look forward to doing some more in camp, I think the better and the more we will gel as a group."

**Q: Is it strange that Piñeiro and Townsend have a history together?**

**Tavecchio:** "It's particular, I wouldn't say weird. One of the first things Johnny told me after he introduced himself, he said 'I'm going to do my best to be the best holder for a lefty possible. So I don't want you to worry about any circumstantial behind the scenes favoritism.' Nothing that I have seen so far has suggested that. He's really gone out of his way to do the best holding for a lefty and he's done a good job."

**Q: Does Bisaccia speak any Italian?**

**Tavecchio:** "A few words in Southern Italian slang. (*laughter*)"





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### **WR RYAN SWITZER**

**Q: Where were you when you found out about the trade? What were the emotions?**

**Switzer:** "I was at the house. My wife and I were on the way to the mall, about to leave. I got the call from Jerry [Jones] and settled with the rest."

**Q: You probably figured you'd be with the Cowboys for a while.**

**Switzer:** "Just the snap of the fingers your world gets flipped upside down. It is the nature of this business. I'm understanding that. Ultimately, realized that everything happens for a reason. I'm here where I'm supposed to be and happy to be here."

**Q: What were your first impressions of Coach Gruden and Derek?**

**Switzer:** "Coach Gruden, you know, you see him on TV growing up announcing and commentating, you realize how passionate he is for the game. You get that sense as soon as you walk in to the building. The energy he brings every day, you can tell how much he cares about this game and the players that he has. DC has been great. So much of a natural leader with his poise and the way he carries himself. You guys know, you've been covering him for a while now. To have someone like that leading your ball club, everyone else has to pick it up. Everyone else has to emulate that, the way that he works, the way that he carries himself because he is the leader."

**Q: A lot of guys on offense are scrambling with all that Gruden has in his playbook. What does that mean for you that your role has to be on offense and special teams?**

**Switzer:** "I know Bisaccia's system. I've had some success in his system. Coming here, I've been able to really focus and hone in on the details of this offense. There's a lot of stuff that you have to be aware of. If you can learn and understand that and put it on the field, you've got a chance to be successful because of how good it is and how much stuff we run. That's been a main focus since I got here, to get the timing down with DC and the quarterbacks and to learn the playbook, checks and reads. Make sure I'm a dependable guy."

**Q: Do you think there's a real opportunity here for you to carve out a role on offense?**

**Switzer:** "No question. I'm ecstatic to be here, especially on the offensive side of the ball. I think you look at the great slot receivers in this league and all of them have got great outside guys around you. That's what makes the middle of the field so deadly, is when you've got outside receivers who can put pressure, not only on corners but safeties. That leaves me to deal with nickel's and linebackers. We've got a plethora of them. We've got All-Pro's on the outside. I think it's going to be special for me here. I'm looking forward to helping this team win and contributing."

**Q: Did your wife move out here with you?**

**Switzer:** "Yeah, she's been great. She's been a trooper. She's got a full-time job as well, so fortunately they're transferring her out here to a firm in San Francisco. We're going to start our lives here in the Bay Area."

**Q: What was your reactions when you saw the rent prices here?**

**Switzer:** "Honey, you need to keep your job. She needs to keep her job."



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### **P JOHNNY TOWNSEND**

**Q: When you were drafted, how realistic did you feel that it was that you'd be playing with Eddy and were you surprised he wasn't drafted?**

**Townsend:** "I was. He was an unbelievable college kicker. It was a pleasure to work with him throughout our college career. It's just so rare to have two college specialists end up at the same place in the NFL. Having the opportunity to make that happen is pretty cool."

**Q: Giorgio was talking about how you've gone out of your way to make him feel like not the odd man out. What was your emphasis there?**

**Townsend:** "There was no bias there, just being teammates with Eddy in college. I know there's a kicker competition going on so each and every day we go out and compete and work to make each other better. That's my mindset going through it."

**Q: Is it hard not to be biased towards your friend?**

**Townsend:** "You could see it that way but no. I just see two kickers going at it each day and giving it their best. I'm there to make it an even playing field for both those guys."

**Q: Coach Bisaccia was saying the ease of you holding for right and left kickers wasn't a problem. Why are you so seamless in being able to do both?**

**Townsend:** "That's just something I've always been able to pick up pretty quickly. It's like writing with your right and left hand. It's tough to do at first but once you get the hang of it, it's pretty easy. We work it every day. We've had hundreds and hundreds of reps from the right and left side since I've been here. It's starting to become smooth and the operation is so clean. It's coming along really well."

**Q: He said since you were a catcher, the shifting of the weight may be helping you.**

**Townsend:** "Maybe. That squatting position, the hand-eye coordination, I think it all plays into it. I was a two-sport guy my whole life and just seeing the ball, catching the ball, placing the ball is critical."

**Q: You played baseball through high school?**

**Townsend:** "All the way through high school my senior year."

**Q: Are you naturally ambidextrous?**

**Townsend:** "Really not at all. Nothing else."

**Q: Had you ever held for a left-footed kicker before you got here?**

**Townsend:** "I hadn't in college for a left-footed kicker but I messed with it at practice. Just seeing the punter ahead of me, Kyle Christy... I saw his Pro Day and there was a coach that made him hold both sides. That was something I always worked on once a week throughout college in case that opportunity presented itself."

**Q: Was there anything that stood out to you from your workout with Coach Bisaccia?**

**Townsend:** "There were a couple other coaches that day during the workout but just having that one time meeting him and my first impression of him was so huge. How much he pays attention to detail





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and, in my opinion, he's the best special teams coach in the league. Having the opportunity to play with him and learn as much as I can in my first year is going to be huge for me."

**Q: Raiders have quite a tradition at the punter tradition. Are you aware of that legacy?**

**Townsend:** "Some of the best punters in NFL history have come through here. Ray Guy, Shane Lechler. There are some big shoes to fill. I'm going to play my role this year coming in as a rookie and try to have the biggest impact that I possibly can."

**Q: What have you learned about Giorgio?**

**Townsend:** "I love Giorgio. He's a competitor. He's a hard worker. Everything he does, he does with a purpose. That's what the coaching staff likes about him, that's what I like about him personally. He loves to compete. He's a really good kicker."

**Q: When you saw Eddy for the first time, what were your thoughts on him as a new football player coming from soccer?**

**Townsend:** "It was pretty seamless, surprisingly. Being a guy that had no real high school experience cooking a football, coming to Division I football and playing in front of 95,000 people every Saturday. You would think there would be some issues with that transferring from soccer to football. He executed when he needed to and he's so calm and cool under pressure that he just goes out there, quiets out the crowd and kicks the ball straight. It's pretty cool."

**Q: Have you seen progress from him since then?**

**Townsend:** "When he first came in to UF, he was a pretty raw player. He didn't know much about the technique of kicking a football and all the little things that play into it, in terms of his approach, his steps, his angles. That's just something he gradually learned about and picked up on as he went through the process and picked up on as a player. Now that he's around Coach Bisaccia and even Giorgio, those are two really good mentors for him. He's learning more about the game and himself as a player."

**Q: How did directional punting become such a big part of your game?**

**Townsend:** "My special teams coaches at Florida put so much emphasis on it. We have so many scary returners at the SEC level. We had to find ways to shrink the field, get the ball to the sidelines, limit the opportunities for returners. That was something I worked on day-in and day-out. I knew the pressure of the situations I was going to be in and how much of a role I could have with the team if I could do that, by limiting the returns of the opponents. As my career went on, I developed in that way. I want to take my game in the NFL the same way I did in college."

**Q: Do you ever place a cone or something by the sideline to try to focus on?**

**Townsend:** "I've always messed with it in college but I never really was confident enough to whip it out in a game. It's pretty risky, pretty unconventional. That was just a stinger, a low line-drive out of bounds. It's something I've been working on. I want to whip it out in the team period and see how I could execute it. Worked out pretty well."

**Q: Giorgio compared you to Captain America earlier.**

**Townsend:** "I don't know if I can identify with Captain America but I'll take the compliment from Giorgio."



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**Q: There are tapes of Eddy making 72, 77 yard field goals. Where does his strength come from?**

**Townsend:** "He's naturally gifted. Some people are just born with a leg. Some guys can go out and throw a baseball over 100 miles per hour and that's something I could never do. Some guys are blessed with that gift. For him, it's a lot of leg speed and contact. It's momentum and really good contact. It's pretty amazing."

**Q: There are a lot of veterans on your coverage unit like Keith Smith and Kyle Wilber. How much of an advantage is that to you?**

**Townsend:** "It's huge. Having guys like that, that you just named, covering punts for me is a dream come true. You always want to have a coverage unit like the one we have. We're growing as a team each day we go out there. We're learning about each other's games. They're learning what it's like to cover my balls. I'm learning what it's like to kick to certain parts of the field. It's a unique experience and we're really growing together."

**Q: With the rotation of Giorgio and Eddy on a given day, what does that do for you to be consistent?**

**Townsend:** "It is easier for me to work from the right side. That's something I've done since high school. It's nice to alternate days like that. It not only helps the kicker with their legs and keeping them as fresh as possible, but it helps me not having to make that transition constantly throughout practice. I can kind of focus on one side then go to the other side. It makes it pretty easy."

### K EDDY PIÑEIRO

**Q: When we write your name, is it your preference that we put the accent on your last name?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah, I don't mind. They've always messed it up my whole life (*laughing*)."

**Q: Did you feel like from the moment you stepped on the field that you could kick a football?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah. Yeah, when I got on the field I felt comfortable. It's a weird transition, but I feel like I got it quick."

**Q: Why did you choose to make the transition from soccer to football?**

**Piñeiro:** "My dad played professional soccer and football. I wasn't a big football-time player. It all started when one day he said, 'Hey, let's go to the Alabama football camp.' I said, 'Hey, if I go here and they offer me, then I'm going to keep playing football. If not, I'm done playing football. I'm going to keep playing soccer.' I went up there and I did really good. They offered me and it pretty much took off from there."

**Q: What were your emotions like on Day 3 of the NFL Draft?**

**Piñeiro:** "I was pretty nervous. It was nervous, but fun. I thought I was going to get drafted. I thought I was good enough. I did really good at the combine. Had a bunch of private workouts, but I'm blessed to be here. I thank God every day that the Raiders gave me a shot. I'll make the best of it."



## OAKLAND RAIDERS TRANSCRIPT

**Q: How has it been having Johnny Townsend, knowing you and working with Giorgio Tavecchio?**

**Piñeiro:** "It's been amazing. Giorgio is a really good kicker. Really good guy. Learned a lot from him. It's a good battle. He has a good leg, so do I. He's accurate. It's going to be fun."

**Q: Where does the power come from in your kicks?**

**Piñeiro:** "Probably, so like I said, my dad played professional soccer. Me growing up, he's brought me out to the field and he would make me kick 100 soccer balls with my left and 100 with my right every single day. That's my secret if I had to say (*laughing*)."

**Q: What was the difference mechanical from kicking a soccer ball to kicking a football?**

**Piñeiro:** "I felt like in the beginning my mechanics were a little noisy. I only played two years of college. I feel like over time, just my mechanics are getting better. I've been watching a lot of Dan Bailey and seeing what he does. Seeing him as a rookie and stuff, that's helped me a lot as well. I've talked to Caleb Sturgis, he kicked at Florida and he was a big mentor for me when I was there. So just training with those guys in the offseason and stuff like that has really helped me as far as mechanic wise."

**Q: Have you ever tried to get Johnny to turn the laces towards Giorgio when you're kicking?**  
(*laughing*)

**Piñeiro:** "Never! (*laughing*). I never wish bad upon nobody. Never, never, never."

**Q: Did you graduate?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah I graduated. I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a minor in African American studies."

**Q: Was that a proud moment for you?**

**Piñeiro:** "Oh yeah. I'm the first one in my family to graduate. That was bigger than getting drafted for me if I had to say."

**Q: Would you pursue something in criminal justice after a career in the NFL?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah, I think after I play in the NFL I would like to be a police officer. That's always been one of my dreams, to help out other people and get drugs off the street. That's been my goal."

**Q: Do you find value in doing film work?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah. I've been working with the special teams coach [Rich Bisaccia] on that. We watch film every day. [Assistant special teams coach] Byron [Storer] as well, we watch film with him. I think it's helped me a lot. Just helping me technique wise."

**Q: What do you consider your realistic range?**

**Piñeiro:** "Realistic range? I don't know. I don't know honestly. Depends if it's windy. All depends."

**Q: Did you ever have to kick off the infield dirt?**

**Piñeiro:** "Never, never. I heard about it. I heard about it. That should be fun. That's going to be interesting. Never had to. Challenges are always good."



## OAKLAND RAIDERS TRANSCRIPT

**Q: Did tuning out the outside noise come naturally for you?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah, I mean when I played soccer I was always the guy who took the free kicks, the penalty kicks, those pressure moments. I think going on the road like you said, it was...I don't really think about it. I just go out there and kick the ball and just pray. That's all I do."

**Q: Do you enjoy it when it just goes quiet when you make a kick on the road?**

**Piñeiro:** "Oh, 100 percent. LSU was one of those moments. That was cool."

**Q: Did you miss more extra points than field goals last year?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah (*laughing*)."

**Q: Was it a bad hold or something?**

**Piñeiro:** "No, no, no. There was no bad hold. It was my fault. I should've made them. There was no excuses, but I did miss...I didn't even think about that, that's true."

**Q: Your only field goal miss was early.**

**Piñeiro:** "So my only field goal miss was against Michigan, the first game of the season. I didn't miss after that, thank God. I got into my rhythm, got into my groove and was good."

**Q: What have you learned about and from Tavecchio?**

**Piñeiro:** "Being a professional, honestly. Just seeing his mindset and seeing him watching film and how he breaks down his kicks. It's helped me a lot. He's a really good guy. You guys would think that oh, you know, it's awkward competing or this and that. It's not awkward. I think God has a plan for everybody and that's just the way I look at it."

**Q: Tavecchio doesn't see like the type that would keep tips from you.**

**Piñeiro:** "No, no. He's helped me out a lot. We share our little secrets together, if that makes sense, as far as kicking wise."

**Q: What's been the message from Coach Jon Gruden? Pretty lowkey type of guy?**

**Piñeiro:** "Yeah, he's lowkey. (*laughing*). Very lowkey."