



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing**

**Q: What are your thoughts on the theory that Marshawn Lynch is better and more fresh with a year off from football?**

**Coach Downing:** "I believe in the freshness piece. I certainly believe in that. I don't know if I'd say better off with a year off, but you certainly should be well rested and fresh. He's shown that in practice, so I look forward to seeing what it looks like in games."

**Q: It seems like he has great balance. How important is his balance in his game?**

**Coach Downing:** "It's a huge part of his game. It's the yards after contact. As coaches, those are the bonus yards for you. You can scheme or you can teach or technique up to a certain point and then there comes a time where the runner has got to make you right or get you that extra little bit, and that's what Marshawn does."

**Q: What has his communication been like with the offensive line since he's been here?**

**Coach Downing:** "It's been good. He's such a great teammate – I've talked to you guys about that before. He's a guy that's got that infectious personality and so whether it's just in casual conversation or whether they're talking about scheme, he's built a great rapport with those guys and I know his career has shown how much he appreciates his offensive line and that's certainly carried over to being a Raider."

**Q: What's the experience going to be like going up against Dick LeBeau in your first game as a play caller?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, a lot of respect for coach LeBeau. He had an unbelievable career as a player. I was with the Lions previously in my career, so I know what he did as a player, what he accomplished there. He has a gold jacket for a reason. Just an unbelievable football mind and I have a lot of respect for him, so it makes it fun to have the first regular season game be against a guy like that."

**Q: What stands out about his defense?**

**Coach Downing:** "They are obviously well coached. Not a lot of mental errors, very sound defense. They're a unit that you can bank on being where they're supposed to be. For us, it's a challenge offensively to make sure that we attack them in the right way and make sure that we're on our details as well."

**Q: Is there anything extra for you with this being your first regular season game as the offensive coordinator?**

**Coach Downing:** "Honestly, no. I've had that question from a couple of different people. To me, I've wanted to do the best of my abilities at my job every day since I started working in the NFL. This Sunday just requires a little bit different set of requirements."

**Q: Do you have a script that you go off of from the start of the game? What's your approach?**

**Coach Downing:** "It changes by week. That'd be an unfair answer to give you – yes, I am or no, I'm not – because then you'd try to hold me to it."

**Q: If Jamize Olawale wasn't able to play this week, are you prepared for it?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, and as you're alluding to, there are a lot of different ways to get a lead blocker in the backfield. We can motion guys, you can put different players back there. One thing that [Head Coach] Jack [Del Rio] has really instilled in this staff is being prepared for anything. We're certainly prepared for anybody to fill in at different positions."

**Q: Is Donald Penn ready for a full workload?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, Donald is ready to go. He's a pro and took care of himself. He's ready to go."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

**Q: What was your impression on how he was able to take care of himself and come back ready?**

**Coach Downing:** "Donald is a part of the fabric of this offense. We consider ourselves a family and so when Donald came back, it was just having that string added back to the quilt. He's a pivotal part of what we do. He has a great personality. He's infectious as a worker and a leader, so it was a pretty seamless transition for him."

**Q: What jumped out to you about Michael Crabtree?**

**Coach Downing:** "Unbelievable hands. I remember talking to you guys this spring about his hands and his ability to catch a ball at different angles and pivot and contort his body to make tough catches. That's a really special talent that he has. He's starting to really show his veteran savvy and setting up routes. Understanding how to work defenders versus their leverage. He's just a really impressive individual."

**Q: You have all three receivers under contract for a few years, what will that continuity offer?**

**Coach Downing:** "I think when you can build consistency and chemistry with the players, you can throw with better anticipation and timing. The fourth element to what you talked about with having players under contract is the trigger man. When those four get to work together for that extended period of time, that's when you really get to see growth. Anytime you can put a staff together, a group of talent together and work in the same scheme, you get to iron out the wrinkles. As small as they may be, you can get more and more consistent, which is what we're looking for, too."

**Q: DeAndré Washington and Jalen Richard have so many similarities, but what are the differences between the two? What does each guy do that stands out from the other guy?**

**Coach Downing:** "That'll kind of unfold or play itself as the season goes on in terms of what their roles are going to be. I think they both show a great work ethic at the things we ask them to do in specific packages. Both of them are really dynamic out of the backfield as receivers. I think DeAndré has shown great vision throughout the course of training camp and preseason. He runs hard. Jalen has done a nice job of sticking his foot in the dirt and having more one-cut running."

**Q: Will Marshall Newhouse and Vadal Alexander rotate at the right tackle position?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, we'll see how that all plays out. There's still a lot of discussions between now and Sunday in terms of how we want to finitely do things come gameday. Both of those guys are guys that we feel fortunate to have on the roster."

### **Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.**

**Q: How has Gareon Conley looked?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "The few practices we've had with him he's looked really good. You have to work off the rust a little bit, trying to get his footing right. It's been awhile so he's got a lot of work to do."

**Q: How quickly can that rust come off?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I don't know. You have to talk to the trainers. You have to play ball a long time and get a lot of practice in. This is a team and a game with the best athletes in the world. You have to get a lot of work in."

**Q: Coaches and players have said he does a good job in the classroom, but it's tough to replicate practice reps, right?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "No question. You have to combine the practice work, the practice, stuff going on in the classroom, talking to the other players, watching film, so many different things that must be combined to be a really good player that young players have to put together. He's working through that now."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: What do you like about the interior pass rush?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "How hard they've been working, the studying they've been doing, the ability to try to improve and everybody really working together. It's a lot of talk, it's a lot of work, it's a lot of putting games and diagrams together and finding ways to work together as a team. Really excited about our challenge. The guys are really taking it in and taking it personal. They're very prideful about it. I really feel good about where we are."

**Q: Marquel Lee has said that he tried to attach himself to you as much as possible over training camp. What have you learned about this kid so far?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Marquel, he's very talented. Big body, really smart, cares a lot and when you combine the care with the passion and the talent, and a guy who really wants to learn, my experience you get a lot of good things from the players."

**Q: You guys had a plus-16 in turnovers last year and did good things on third down, but it's almost like when you go into the season, the story of the Raiders is what about that defense? How eager are you to go out there and show them what you've got?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "It's a new season. We have put a lot of work in. I think we understand where we need to improve. We understand the things that we did well. We're really excited about the new challenge. This is the time of year that so much is out there, there's so much we want to do. I think the only thing we need now is to finish a really good practice week. There are so many things that are connected with playing well with our practices, with our meetings, with our ability to work the ball. We're excited about our challenge going into this weekend."

**Q: Did you channel anything from outside perception to prove something?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I'm not sure what the outside perception you're talking about it, but I know what's going on inside and what we're working on. We just need to worry about us getting ourselves ready to play at the highest level. Football is the number one team sport and so many people have roles and responsibilities. It's important for us to execute, play really hard, play really well. You have to eliminate mistakes. You have to keep down explosives, you have to get the ball, you have to play good in the red zone, two-minute drill. There are so many things that are connected to winning, you can't put it on one thing."

**Q: Do you feel any urgency to try some new things as a coordinator given that there weren't too many changes from last year?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "The urgency is to coach better. The urgency is that the players must eliminate mistakes. We're all working together. We're very talented. We're working really hard. We're excited about our challenge."

**Q: Talk about the difficulty of the Titans' pre-snap configurations.**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, obvious things are that the quarterback is really mobile and good. They're a team that really likes to run the ball, big backs. A really good tight end. Across the board, they're really talented. In our case, to be a really good defense, we need to really concentrate on us, concentrate on our execution, concentrate on our ability to tackle and take the ball away, play the situational football really good and put together a solid game from start to finish. No let ups, no times where we're not as excited or pushing. We have to keep the pressure on and really put together a solid game."

**Q: From a pre-snap standpoint, what do you think the Titans do to elicit confusion?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "It's about us. I have to worry about what's going on in our huddle, in our classrooms. We watch the film. We know exactly what they're doing. They know what they do well. It's important for us to eliminate mistakes, take the ball away and make a lot of plays. Want to be good in situational football and take the game apart and play well in situations."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: Communication is important every week, but specifically for your linebackers when they're motioning or calls are changing. What do you want them to focus on?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "It's a team game. Linebackers are communicating, safeties, corners, defensive linemen, everybody is talking. Coaches are talking. I'm in the linebacker's ears, everybody is talking. It's team-wide, everybody is involved."