

Big Ten Football Media Days

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Rutgers Scarlet Knights

Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: Good morning. Thank you Commissioner Warren. I would like to thank our president Jonathan Holloway and our athletic director Pat Hobbs for giving me the opportunity to stand here at this podium of Big Ten Media Days as the head coach at Rutgers. I go back to this is my second stint at Rutgers. I go back to 2002. I was sitting in a small meeting room after a radio show, a weekly radio show, and I turned to one of the hosts I said, You know what, we belong in the Big Ten. And it was a long journey to get to the Big Ten and it occurred after I had left to go to Tampa Bay and now to be back here as a member of the Big Ten at Rutgers it's a dream come true. It's something that I worked very hard to accomplish, didn't get it done, but eventually others got it done and I'm very, very fortunate to be here.

So with that, I'm really excited about the three young men that came with me to Indy. They're a great representation of our program, Noah Vedral, our quarterback, Bo Melton, wide receiver, and Olakunkle Fatukasi, linebacker. I think that you'll enjoy visiting with them and really fine players, but I think even more so great people. So with that, I'll open it up for questions.

Q. You've always recruited well at Rutgers, seems like you've taken it to the next level, maybe what do you attribute that to and maybe what did you learn from your good friend Urban Meyer?

GREG SCHIANO: We're excited about the way recruiting is going this second go around. I think a couple things, number one, we have great staff. Eric Josephs who leads our recruiting department does an incredible job, our staff works very, very hard at recruiting and I really believe Rutgers in the Big Ten what a great opportunity for young student-athletes. To be in the New York metropolitan area, to be playing football at a great academic institution, why shouldn't you go there, not why should you. And I believe that. So it's easy for me to go share that with young people and our families. It's easy for our coaching staff to do. I think when you look at our staff they're people that really believe in Rutgers and what it's about and where we headed. And you mentioned, it was a great experience

working with Urban. I have said this before, I thought I was one of the hardest working recruiters in the business and when I worked for your Urban I saw a guy that trumped me for sure. So I stole some ideas from him, how to do things and the intensity that's required at the upper level in recruiting. So great experience and I'm excited about the players we're bringing in.

The thing that is most important to me is our place isn't for everybody and I want the young people to know that we're very, very up front. I tell our coaches be the same guy when you're recruiting them as you're going to be when you coach them. And I think our guys do a tremendous job of that and we make sure we're looking for unselfish guys that really love the game of football. Like is okay, but it doesn't work at our place. As soon as we make that clear and we identify those guys, I think it narrows the pool but it saves us a lot of time and that's what I think our staff has done great job of so far.

Q. What does CHOP mean to you?

GREG SCHIANO: CHOP. Great question and it's something that, it's one of our, one of the three pieces of our culture. And CHOP is the ability to focus no matter what's going on, the mental and physical toughness to be able to stay focused on that spot on the tree no matter what bombs are going off because there's always bombs going off, whether it's relationship issues, financial issues, academic issues, the opponent across the field, those are all bombs that are going off. Can you stay focused on that spot and keep hitting that tree over and over and over again until eventually it falls. Then we take a rest and then we go after the next tree. And if we can keep that kind of workman-like mentality with an unselfish group of young men, eventually we're going to get to where we want to.

Q. What's the biggest thing that Noah Vedral has brought to your program and has he been everything you hoped he would be as a transfer quarterback?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, Noah was a tremendous addition and it was during COVID, I was in my office, I was actually sitting in my home in Columbus, and he came into the portal. My recruiting guy shot me the video I watched it



and I watched, I don't know, 180 snaps. I said this is the guy. We got to get him. He's going to be perfect for what we do offensively and a two-week process that ended with Noah committing and signing with us and he's been everything that we were looking for. He's a tremendous student of the game, number one, very, very smart. Can run our offense, can run the whole operation. We're a no-huddle outfit and he runs it seamlessly and I think having been in the system for a year it's going to be even better going forward. And I think the other thing that he brings is he's got a respect of his teammates. He's an unselfish guy who is a giving guy and puts the team first. So when you have those traits, success is going to come.

Q. I know recruiting is about getting the proper kids, the right kids, into your program, but being a Jersey native as myself, I love to see in-state recruits go to Rutgers and perform and do great things there. Do you have like a little extra incentive to kind of get these Jersey boys to stay home?

GREG SCHIANO: Without a doubt. It's well chronicled that New Jersey has been a hotbed of high school football and college recruiting for a number of years and people have gone different places and that never worried me. When we first got to Rutgers it wasn't in vogue. This was back in 2001. It wasn't in vogue to go to Rutgers. We actually built our program with a majority of South Florida players. At one point I think we had 39 scholarship players from South Florida. But then when we started to win it became cool to go to Rutgers and one of the best players in New Jersey started staying home and going to Rutgers. And the thing that I love is when we came back, I wouldn't say it was exactly where we left off, but we picked up pretty darn close to where we left off and we've just kind of been going like that.

Now I understand it's going to have to happen on the field. I mean, that's what you get judged on, but I'm really pleased and I truly believe that if we bring the right people and hopefully their from New Jersey, New York, that metropolitan area, but we go elsewhere. If we bring the right people, the right cultural fits to our program, we're going to be fine.

Q. We did the math. It's the first time in over a decade Rutgers has the same quarterback and offensive coordinator returning. How much of an impact can that be for the offense for the program?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think it's important. I'm pretty excited to have the same head coach back too. That helps me. But, yeah, I am excited. I think Sean Gleeson is a tremendous part of our program. We worked very hard to get him. He came from Oklahoma State. And there was

points where I didn't know if he was actually going to come and he's done a tremendous job. And then Noah, I spoke about earlier, to have those two guys back working together and they really do, they work hand in glove, they're excellent together, I love listening to them in meetings and they're a great example for the other quarterbacks in the room because we have some good, young quarterbacks. So it's going to be a huge positive and I agree, it's nice to have some continuity.

Q. You took over a Rutgers team that hasn't won a Big Ten game in a couple years. You win three last season. Where has your team improved the most over the last few year and a half there?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a great question. I think a couple ways. Number one, our team bought into our culture. That was my number one criteria. If we were going to have what we would label a success wasn't necessarily tied to the result right away, but what it was tied to is did the culture get embedded in the program, did our players own it, and they clearly have. And like I said, I think you'll see that with the three guys that came with me, but there's a whole bunch more back in Piscataway that are embedded in our culture, believe in the way we're doing things. And then certainly winning some games after not having won very many built their confidence and they started to believe. You know what, we belong in this league and as I told them, you do guys, and it's just going to become more and more evident each and every year and that's when I'm excited about is that Rutgers, as I said, I felt all along that we belonged in this league from 2002 on and to be here right now I can't tell you how excited I am.

Q. Just to have Olakunle back for your defense, how big is that for the stability and what that means for the team?

GREG SCHIANO: I think that may have been the biggest recruit we signed this year, the fact that he came back for one more season. He's a tremendous football player. He led the Big Ten in tackles. But more than that he's a student of the game. He's going to be a really, really fine professional football player because he loves it, he studies it, he lives the game, and takes care of himself the way that a pro football player takes care of himself. So he's a great example, not only his production on the field, but he's a great example for our younger players and for our newcomers that are just starting with us.

Q. What dynamic, if any, has changed now that you and PJ Fleck are coaching in the same conference?

GREG SCHIANO: Great question. Yeah. PJ is, I guess I would say a little brother. We worked together in two



different places, at Rutgers and then again at Tampa, and I'm just so proud of the way that he has progressed. I mean he's bypassed me by far. I mean, he's exciting. I enjoy watching him coach his team. I enjoy watching his teams play and I'm really, really proud of him. Very proud of him.

Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on NIL. Obviously you've been at Rutgers way before any of this stuff was ever going to happen. So what do you think about just how that changes the landscape of what things are going to change in college football?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it's obviously the big question right now. I think, number one, we're going to learn a lot more in the next 12 to 18 months exactly how it's going to impact everything. I think it's a great thing for our student-athletes, though. They deserve to be able to make income off of their name and likeness. I agree with that. I think the thing that it is even, I wouldn't say as much, but equally important, it's a great opportunity for us to educate them, right? We're injecting them into the free market society. There's so many lessons to be learned. Just the other day we had a deep discussion about income tax. I think back to when I was 19 or 20 years old. I didn't understand income tax. I mean, wait a minute, that dollar, I don't actually get to keep that whole dollar? So to have that conversation, just to see their eyes, because when NIL became official, we had -- and even before -- we had a very, very concentrated audience. They wanted to know the facts. And what a great opportunity for all of us as coaches to teach our guys. Again, my whole thing is recruit and develop. Recruit the right guys for Rutgers, and then develop them in every area of their life so they can go be the husbands and fathers and successful people in society. Learning all this about finances, about free market and trade, all that stuff, I think it's great for our student-athletes.

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