

Big Ten Football Media Days

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Rutgers Scarlet Knights Coach Greg Schiano

Press Conference



KEVIN WARREN: Next to the podium, we have an experienced head football coach from Rutgers University, who's very involved in the community in New Jersey and across the country, especially the Rutgers Future Scholars program that focuses on providing individuals from challenged communities the opportunity to attend school.

It's so good to have Coach Schiano in the Big Ten Conference, and I know he's excited about the season. We're excited to watch his team compete this year. So welcome to the podium and to the stage the head football coach at Rutgers University, head coach Greg Schiano.

GREG SCHIANO: Thank you, Kevin, for those kind words, and thank you all for coming out today. This is the best football conference and the best conference, period, in America, and you help make it that.

I want to thank all our players and our coaches that have worked incredibly hard since our last game on December 31st. They have made an uncommon commitment to our program, and I want it to be recognized. I know every coach feels that way probably, but I want to recognize our guys because I'm really proud of them.

There's three guys that we brought with us that I think represent, embody our program. You're going to get a chance to meet them. Johnny Langan is as versatile an offensive football player as there is in America. He'll line up all over the place for us. Best of all, he really does embody our program. He's tough, he's smart, and he's all New Jersey. You'll get a chance to meet with Johnny.

Avery Young, Avery is as experienced a player as maybe anyone in the country. He's got over 3,000 snaps as a Rutgers player. I was grateful when he decided to come back for his last year. Just another tremendous person that represents our program the way that we want it to be represented.

Then the last fellow we brought with us is Adam Korsak, our punter. Adam is the best punter that I've ever been around in 35 years. That's a pretty big statement. I've

been around a lot of them. He's also just a tremendous human being. He's from Australia. Probably those old beer commercials for Dos Equis, probably the most interesting man in the world. He is a lot of fun to talk with, been a lot of places, done a lot of great things, and really a fun guy. So take advantage of that.

I'm really excited about our team, about our program, about the state of New Jersey and Rutgers, where things are headed, the entire athletic department, the whole school. I said this last year, I think Rutgers, the whole university is a school that's on the rise. I'm grateful that we're in the Big Ten. I think we can never lose sight of that.

That was something that I believe was critically important for our university back in 2002, long before it happened. When it finally did happen, I wasn't there, but I was really excited for the school and for the state, born and raised, and now to be back as the head coach at a Big Ten institution at Rutgers, it's truly a blessing.

With that, I'll open it up for questions.

>> The you are set to play Indiana much later in the season. Indiana will want revenge after you blew them out of the water, 38-3. What sticks out to you about the Hoosiers and their playing style coming into this season?

GREG SCHIANO: Any team that Tom Allen coaches is going to play incredibly hard. I know the guy -- we recruit in Florida a lot. They do as well. So we bump into each other in recruiting, and I know they've recruited really well over the years.

So when you have good players and you have a group of coaches that are really excellent coaches and you have a great university like Indiana, it's going to be a good football team.

We split in my time back, so this year will be a little bit of a rubber match, and I'm looking forward to it. I love playing in this league. I love playing in this conference. So I'm looking forward to all the games.

Q. Your thoughts on USC and UCLA going to the Big



Ten in '24 with a full revenue sharing agreement right away? As opposed to when your school came into the league, you guys didn't have a full revenue sharing agreement right away.

GREG SCHIANO: I'm really excited about UCLA and USC coming into the league. I think what it does is takes a great league and just made it greater. Like-minded institutions academically, athletically. Our footprint spreads from New York to L.A. It doesn't get a lot better than that.

I know there's some concerns about travel and those things. You know, you do it. You figure it out. But it's really super for our league. That other stuff, I don't even concern myself with. That's not my business. You do what you need to do in the times that you're in.

I'm really proud of our conference for doing something that puts us right there. Those two leagues, those are special. As I said earlier, I consider ourselves blessed to be a member.

Q. You're not the only team in the Big Ten to have an Australian punter, of course referring to Ohio State's Jesse Mirco. What keeps bringing Big Ten teams down to Australia in search for punters?

GREG SCHIANO: It is a unique skill set these young men have to be able to -- so many of them played the Australian rules football where they can move and at a moment's notice drop it and punt it. What a get out of jail free card that can be when you have to protect against these great athletes in the Big Ten Conference.

So I know this. I said it earlier, but I really have so much respect for Adam, the way he approaches his craft and the way that he leads on our football team. That's not an ordinary thing for a punter on a football team to be respected and looked up to like he is on our team. I'm just grateful we've got one more year with him.

Q. You've been probably, even outside of punting, one of the more effective special teams units. What's the key to having effective special teams, and how much of a difference do you think that makes in the Big Ten?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it makes a big difference in any league. I think special teams are critical right now. I don't subscribe to the theory -- you hear a lot of people say it's a third, a third, and a third. That's not true. Special teams plays cover about 22 percent of the game, but the fact of the matter is they cover the most real estate of any play in the game when you add them all up. So I think they're critically important.

I think we put a great deal of importance on it in our program. Anywhere I've ever been, that's probably the biggest thing is we spend a lot of time on it. We're willing to play our starters, our best players on it, and I do think that certainly teams -- I don't think all the special teams are created equal either. I think certain teams are a little more important than others, and you'll see guys, starting linebackers, starting tight ends, starting running backs on those teams.

Q. Is there any update regarding Drew Singleton's waiver request the team submitted to NCAA for his eligibility this season?

GREG SCHIANO: For those of you that don't know, Drew Singleton played for us -- he's been at Rutgers even before I got there. Drew declared for the NFL draft in December, and then we got that late bowl bid, and on eight days' notice, Drew came back and played.

A lot of guys that were NFL prospects -- not a lot of them, but some of them decided not to play in the game, and I understood why, with only eight days to get ready and risk of injury and those things. But Drew came back and plays for Rutgers. Unfortunately in that game, he got an ankle injury.

So picture on January 1st he's walking around in a boot, and this is supposed to be the time he's getting ready for the NFL draft. It really hurt his development and getting prepared. On top of that, COVID, every NFL executive that I talked to, COVID increased draft boards by about 30 to 40 players. So now all of a sudden, those guys that were late-round draft picks, they became priority free agents. Then the priority free agents became lower free agents. So what happened to those guys that were just lower free agents? They didn't have an opportunity.

That's what Drew was. We're hopeful that cooler minds prevail. We have an appeal in. I'm hopeful he will be able to come back. He wants to seek his graduate degree. I believe that -- he does so many great things. He's a kid from inner city Newark who's overcome a lot. The guy is trying to do the right thing. I hope that we're able to do the right thing and get him back, but we're waiting to hear.

Q. You're obviously in year three in your second stint. Is there a team you look back to in your first stint that you pull as maybe an example of where this program is currently?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a good question. Probably the -- kind of a combination of 2004 and 2005 team. We were really young but talented. That's probably what I remember, yeah.

Q. How does your quarterback competition look this year? And specifically, how has Noah Vedral reacted to being challenged after getting quite a few starts?

GREG SCHIANO: We do, we have a quarterback competition, but you mentioned Noah. Noah is the ultimate competitor. He is an awesome guy to have on our team. He wants to be a coach and is going to be a great coach. So any of you coaches that are listening to this, I would highly recommend getting him on your staff when he's done playing. We're going to try.

But Noah is competing really hard. He's a monster in the off-season program. Gavin Wimsatt is another guy that is competing for the job, and then Evan Simon.

I'd say all three of those guys go into training camp -- Noah, as you mentioned, has two years' worth of starts under his belt. So certainly an advantage for him with experience.

But I think the one thing I've learned over the years is, when you have good players, you've got to let them compete, and it's got to sort itself out. If it doesn't sort itself out by Game 1, then we'll play more than one guy. If it does, then we'll play one guy and we'll have another guy ready to go and a third if he had some issues.

I'm not concerned about it. I'm not going to make it happen. I'm going to let it happen and observe it and make the decision based on that.

Q. I was wondering if you could tell us about Tennessee now.

GREG SCHIANO: Not quite yet. Not quite yet. It's coming, though.

Q. Yeah, I'm sure it is. What's the one thing more than anything else you fixed when you got back to Rutgers that you're seeing come to fruition now, that reminds you of when you were there before?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know if it's one thing. I think it really is an accumulation of the little things. You may say, what do you mean "little things"? Certainly culture is the most important thing to me. When you walk into a program, you have to establish your culture. Not that the program, culture you took over was or wasn't good. That's neither here nor there. It's this is your program, and you have to establish your culture because, if you don't believe it, how do you expect the players to believe it? So I think that's the number one thing.

Then there's a host of little things that I think add up to the big results, and that's what we constantly do. I hear a lot of coaches talk about we've got to get one percent better, one percent better. I think our players do, our coaches do, our administrators do, our staff does. Everybody's got to get a little bit better every day. In doing that, hopefully as we move forward, you can see all those actions result -- have results at the end.

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