

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 4, 2021
Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Postgame Press Conference



Rutgers 61, Temple 14

GREG SCHIANO: Appreciate you coming out. Hope everybody, you and your family are safe from the storm. I know it's been tough on everybody.

So, try to answer your questions.

Q. Is that how you draw it up, dominating defense, lots of really good special teams plays, solid enough offense, is that how you would draw your blueprint up?

GREG SCHIANO: I think, really, you look at it at halftime, I told the team, the score, there was a pretty big differential in the score but there wasn't really a differential in yards and those kind of things, the third down conversions. The difference was the takeaways in the first half.

When they came out and scored to start the second half -- you know, I've been doing this a long time, and I knew that that was a pivotal time for this football team to see what we did". Were we going to be able to take momentum back or was this going to go down to the end and be decided by a field goal? We needed to do what we did today.

So do I design it that way? I wish I could tell you that I do, but I was glad to see that they seized the momentum back after that first drive and took control of the football game.

Q. The two days off, did that change how you approached this game at all or did you just push everything back?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it did change. You've got to remember, like it wasn't just a two-day delay, but just like everybody else, several of our kids got evacuated from their apartments. So they are worried about their stuff and we are in the hotel and they don't know; some of them have animals, dogs, all kinds of things.

So it was, you know, Thursday, triaging everything to make sure everybody was taken care of and then we literally talked about hitting reset. You can't just continue on that

game prep that you were scheduled to play. You know, you build yourself, you build yourself up to play, so we had to hit reset.

We came back on Thursday afternoon and had a Thursday practice because we had to go back in the week and start it over at Thursday. I thought our guys, that was another thing I was very proud of them. They did a great job of restarting the week and staying focused the final two days.

Q. You always put a high emphasis on takeaways. Talk about the early takeaways and how they shaped the tone of this game.

GREG SCHIANO: Well, they were the whole story in the first half. Might have been a ten-yard differential in yards, right. The third down conversions were the same, so yeah, it was -- they were critical.

Q. What was your initial assessment of the way that the offense played overall and the way that Noah obviously played?

GREG SCHIANO: You know, things didn't go smoothly for us, right. It wasn't like things were just clicking, and we'll find out why that is. Like I sound like every coach, right, "let me look at the tape." But it's hard to tell on the field what's going on but that's okay. Because when you do it as a football team you have to find a way to keep poking and prodding and finding out where you're going to be able to make some yards and then make some points. And that's what we did today and eventually got it rolling a little bit with the help of some more takeaways and some good kicking plays.

But look, we have a lot of work to do. It was nice to be able to win the game convincingly in the second half and be able to learn from all the mistakes we had from a good victory. But we've really got to get better here between now and next Saturday going up to Syracuse.

Q. Just on a personal level, to be back in this stadium with fans in the stands, what was that like for you today?

GREG SCHIANO: It was really good, really cool. Now I



tell you, I thought we were in big trouble. We come down and you hear the music playing and then I'm going to lead my team out of the tunnel, and I veer hard right to go to the bench and I face-plant over the top of a TV, one of the TV guys. I said, "Oh, this is a great start to the day. This is going to be beautiful."

But that was the low point of the day. So that was good. But really, all kidding aside, it was really super. And I'm so proud of our student section. You know, they say students won't come early in the morning; students won't come at noon.

Well, I was pretty darned impressed by our students. They did a heck of a job. They were loud. It was great energy, great excitement, and to all our fans, really. I mean, think about what this area, this state and this area just went through, and to have that kind of crowd, it's a testament to the fan base we have and to what we have to look forward to moving forward. So I was thrilled with that.

Q. Finishing with only one penalty, how encouraging is that, especially given it's the first game of the season?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I was proud of that, very proud of that. And it was a fluke penalty in that, right. I mean, Max Melton got off so fast that it was a punt block. So I guess we didn't cover that if you get there and he hasn't even started to punt it yet, you just tackle him and it's our ball.

So he went to block it and the ball kind of went under his hands, or that's what I'm told, at least. That's an odd one. Not to make light because that is something that we've had our 12 and 13 shots with penalties; so really good focus. Think about those offensive linemen. Temple was doing some things different. They were playing some three-man front. They were moving the front. They were doing different things, mugging linebackers and not to flinch, to stay in there and hold your water, that was pretty impressive.

Now, we got to block them better, but one step at a time.

Q. Obviously big news down south. When is Gavin Wimsatt going to be here, and can you talk us through how this came to be and what's his role going to be? Is he going to play this year?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, the way it came to be is we know what happened at Ohio State, and I think the family saw that and they asked, really, just curiously, could we do that. We said, well, we could look into it if you want to. And we did, and it was a possibility because he's done a good job academically.

So he took some classes to get it accelerated, and so he played in his third game last night. And now he'll be coming to Rutgers, I think he's supposed to arrive Sunday sometime. We'll get him started in classes on Monday.

His role, look, he's playing in a high school game Friday night, so I'm not going to put the cart before the horse here. We'll just get him here and get him acclimated. It will be a great opportunity to learn our culture, get exposed to the scheme, learn about being a college football player. It will be good to have him here. As long as this was his thing and he wanted to do it, I think it's great.

Q. Sort of an unprecedented thing to have this happen, a high school player play a game on Friday and then join campus. Can you talk about the changing nature of college sports in general and your thoughts on the entire deal?

GREG SCHIANO: Right, after doing this 33 years, I'm probably more of a traditionalist. But I'm learning every single day that you've got to be moving with the times. Otherwise the times just pass you by.

So this is where college football is heading. I don't -- I think, you know, just if you think back to when high school seniors were starting midyear, that was a big thing. I mean, he's starting in January? And now we had twice as many of our class start in January as started in June.

So that's become the norm, not the exception. The early signing date, we call it the early signing date. That is the signing date. If you want to call it something else, you call it the late signing date in February.

So things are changing quickly in college athletics and we're going to have to learn and we're going to have to navigate for sure. But you've got to keep moving forward. I think if you sit back and just kind of meander around, you'll get left in the dust.

Q. As you know, Rutgers fans are going to be talking about know and his future here. Do you have to have a conversation with him to give him a pep talk and let him know the job is his right now?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't think pep talk -- like I told him, when this thing broke last night, I didn't think it would break till he got here, but really, did I -- who the heck knows, you know, the way it is. As soon as it happened I grabbed the quarterbacks and I just explained to them, hey, this is what's happening.

And our program, everything is about competition and



every guy knows that. There's no misunderstanding that anybody owns anything, right. We work every single day to earn it, present company included.

So I think our guys, really, it doesn't faze them. I know one thing, they have got a great quarterback room and they will accept him and help him grow and learn. That's what I fully -- I don't expect it to happen. I know it will happen.

Q. Kyle Monangai had a big day. Did he kind of earn his role through camp, I guess, to have eight touches, a couple receptions?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I think you guys saw the scrimmages, right. So you guys were privy to this guy had a really good training camp and he runs with great pad level, and he runs very aggressively and decisively.

I like our running back room. I think it's going to take the whole room to win games. So we'll just keep rotating them, keeping them fresh. Pop is the starter. That's the way it is. But I think we have some guys that can play, between Aaron and Kyle, I think we have a very good running back room, and we've just got to keep building on it and spreading it around in different packages and all that stuff.

So again, I want to thank everybody, you guys for coming. I know every one of us was touched by what happened around here the last -- in the last three or four days and for you to continue to cover the team, it means a lot and I appreciate it.

We will see you next week. Thanks, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...