

# Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference



Rutgers 45, Delaware 13

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it was good to get back home in front of our fans. I thought the student section was outstanding. They got here early again and stayed for a better part of the game which I was really pleased with. Try to answer anything I can.

**Q. What did you think about the way you applied and the offense overall and how nice to see the offense play this way off some of the inconsistency the first two games?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we needed that, right, and I thought Noah was very efficient. I thought the O-Line did a better job of protecting him. The big thing is we have not been very efficient in third down conversions and today we were really -- I think we were ten of 14 which is huge. If you can do that, you're going to have a chance. And as I've said to you guys the first two weeks, if you don't turn it over, you always got a chance. And that's three weeks in a row, really good job by them.

**Q. Did you guys make an effort to open things up more or just making the third downs kind of fed into that?**

GREG SCHIANO: Partly fed into it, and the other thing was we protected better. It's not like those plays weren't on the video in the first two games. We just never got a chance to get the ball there. So we protected a little bit better and we were able to get the ball out.

**Q. Can you talk about the performance defensively?**

GREG SCHIANO: Defensively in the first half, I was frustrated. I didn't think we played like ourselves. We didn't tackle well. We didn't cover man-to-man the way we're capable of.

Then we had a discussion about it. They came out and did much better. I think Delaware was three for eight in third down conversions the first half and they ended up three for

whatever it was, 14 or 15. So they didn't convert in the second half, if I'm correct; I think I am.

And you know, I looked at the stats at the half, and they had like 180-something yards and they ended with 261. Much better in the second half, but we can't go out and do that. We have to play Rutgers defense all the time, Rutgers special teams all the time; and as the offense gets better and better, the offensive line gets better and better, that's when we can become a team.

**Q. What does this do for Noah's confidence?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think any time you perform efficiently like that, that would help anybody's confidence. Noah doesn't lack for confidence, though. He's a very confident guy because he prepares so well. He's one of the best preparation guys that we have on the team as far as how he gets ready for each and every game. And that's the way we approach it; that every game is a one-game season and we put everything we've got into that one game, and it starts tomorrow.

We'll evaluate this one and then they will start to move, everyone will start to move toward Michigan.

**Q. The run defense specifically, what were some of the issues there?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it's not a big mystery. We lost the edge on the long run and we miss the tackle. It's a 14-yard gain. You don't like 14-yard gains but you live with them, right and then you go get a six-yard loss and kind of balances out.

But you miss, you lose the edge and then you miss a tackle, and now you have a long run and that guy is a good player. He's a really good player. He was the Player of the Year in their conference last year, so he's really good.

**Q. 3-0 heading to the Big House, is a game like that part of the reason why you wanted to come here, a Big Ten Football opportunity?**

GREG SCHIANO: Absolutely. Yeah, they are good -- they are a really good football team. I guess it was pretty



one-sided today. I didn't see any of it. I just heard the score. We know what we're up against. It sounds like Michigan is back to being Michigan.

And we had our crack last year and didn't do it. So now we're going on the road and we've got to find a way against a very good football team.

**Q. We talked about this the last few weeks but this was another game with only two penalties, how important has the discipline been and how important will that be going into Michigan next week?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think it's very important. We can't overcome when we make those kind of mistakes, not yet. Sometimes you can when you're really, really talented and really, really primed and it's the same guys and you've had them forever. You know what, that's when you almost, what's the big deal, we'll make it up.

That's not us right now. We have to play that way. And I think the two big things, the biggest thing is taking care of the football. The guys have done a very good job with that and the second is if you play efficiently and don't give back yards, you have a chance.

**Q. With the offensive line shuffle, with Bordner at left tackle to start, I know you can't see much from field level but do you think it worked? Were you experimenting with different units on the fly there?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it wasn't on the fly. We practiced different combinations. We rotated. So we had a three-tackle rotation, a three-guard rotation, and Nick was the only guy who was the guy who played at all until the end when the young pup got in there.

So yeah, I think we're going to keep doing that until it really defines itself. But you're right, without watching it, how do I know? You know, watching a lot of things during the game.

**Q. Can you expand more on the lack of turnovers after three weeks? It's the first team a Rutgers has done that after three games since 2009. Been a long time. What do you attribute that to?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think it's a serious commitment and buy-in by our players to what we stress. We believe very deeply that the ball is the program. Kirk Ciarrocca brought that here, and that's stuck with us everywhere we've been.

And it's very important to us that you realize that when you carry that ball, you're carrying it because -- as crazy as it is,

right, you need that ball to score every way except the safety. If you don't have the ball, you can't score.

To simplify it to the most simple degree, our number has to be bigger than their number otherwise we lose. So kind of common sense, we have to take care of that thing and they are doing a good job of it. We have to continue it, right. The minute you take it for granted, it spills.

**Q. Talk about Brandon Sanders' big game, his journey has been a unique one?**

GREG SCHIANO: It really has. He's a tremendous young man. I remember I flew in to see my son, Joe, playing and he was on the team. I think he was a freshman, and he caught a dig like back behind him and I remember saying, "That kid, he's special."

And then as time would tell, he was looking for a place to transfer and he had some options, and he decided to come here. And he's doing a very good job, and he's really a great guy to have on the team. He's fit right in he's helped us on special teams and at receiver and playing both inside and outside. So he's really been -- we're very fortunate to have him.

**Q. There's a saying in sports that you have to go through the process and now you're in a situation where the team has been successful, particularly over the last couple of years, what's going to be the approach with this team going undefeated now with some guys who have never like this to make the next step?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, the good thing about the way we approach things, is what chop is about is staying focused on the job at hand, whatever that job might be.

So they have to take care of their bodies tonight and tomorrow they come in, and I literally tell them, look, we can't do anything about Tuesday until Tuesday, but we can make sure we do the things to make sure we have the best Tuesday possible; that's doing your treatment, coming out to practice tomorrow.

There are certain things we really emphasize on Sunday night, and we have to get better at it. You can't play the game until Saturday. We just have to take care of what's right now, and we literally start the season saying there's 12 one-game seasons. You spill everything you've got.

So when I stand up here, I can tell you, by the time I get here, I am shot. When I'm done with you guys, I'm not -- I am going home and hitting the couch. That's exciting me. But these games take everything you've got, at least they

do me. They take everything you've got out of you and I hope that's our team; that they put so much into it the whole week that by the time they get to Saturday, it's just a great feeling, or you're very frustrated because you put all that into it and you didn't win, right, so far it's been a great feeling all three of the weeks.

**Q. You talked about this week, don't overlook these guys, they are really good. First defensive series you have, the penalty which extends the drive but you still pressure and out, and the first offensive series, you go right down the field and score. How encouraging is that to you that they listened and you knew they were going to be ready?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think we have a trust, our staff and our players; I don't think, I know we do. We tell them the truth.

So I don't try to sugarcoat it and tell them -- I flat out tell them what I think we're up against and if we're not really, really on our chop, this is what could happen, but if we are, this should happen. Rather than play head games, we don't do that. Maybe I used to do that more when I was younger. That's to me not the way to go.

If we are going to talk about trust, then it's got to be both ways all the time and our guys have done a good job of believing and doing what we've asked them to do. So we've just got to keep doing that because we will get better. Like we're getting better. We just have to keep at it.

**Q. You've been around the game for 30-something years.**

GREG SCHIANO: Thanks, Keith, I didn't know that. You've been awhile, too, Butch.

**Q. Have you seen a punter land the ball at the one-yard line three straight weeks?**

GREG SCHIANO: He's the best I've ever been around. The best I've ever been around. He really is something else. Nothing you can say other than, I look at him and it's like -- we're lucky, we're very, very blessed to have him. He's a special player. He's a game changer.

Guys, thanks for coming out. I appreciate it.

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