

# Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 27, 2021

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference



Maryland 40-Rutgers 16

GREG SCHIANO: Okay, guys. Try to answer anything I can. Excuse my voice. Tough one for those guys downstairs right now. We have some guys that have played their last game in SHI Stadium, and it's sad for them. They came here under a different coaching staff. They stuck with it and became part of this family and have done a really good job, so I'm proud of those guys. I'm going to miss them. Open it up.

**Q. If there are open spots, would you guys accept the bowl bid at 5-7?**

GREG SCHIANO: I'm not going to deal in that conjecture right now. What I'm going to do is take care of our players. I hit the road recruiting early tomorrow. Just do my job, and then if opportunities present themselves, we'll have to make some decisions.

**Q. What do you feel like the biggest factor was in the game getting away in the first half there?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think the big plays. The two big pass plays that spotted them a 14-0 -- well, 13-0. We blocked the kick, but 13-0 lead. It was very clear they're a different team when they're ahead. We talked about it all week that we needed to hold up defensively, give our offense a chance to put some points on the board, and that didn't go the way we planned, and then very true to form -- it was interesting. The quarterback had not turned the ball over once when they were leading all season long. He only turned the ball over when they were behind, so it was a huge goal that we did not reach.

**Q. What did you see from the offense in the first half, and then what led to the change to put Evan in in the second half coming out of the break?**

GREG SCHIANO: We made a couple few plays in the first half, but it just felt like we were swimming upstream, and Noah has taken so many shots. I think the cumulative effect -- when he went down, I almost said, that's it, right

then and there. I mean, he has been hit. He has been -- there's been many a Sunday where the training staff and the medical staff said, "Coach, I would not count on him," and he is just such a tough guy. By Wednesday he is practicing, and by Friday he is, "Coach, I'm good." I think the cumulative effect of those shots, so Sean and I talked at halftime, and we felt like let's try to see if we can give him a little rest and see if we can get a little spark from Evan, and Evan went in and did a pretty good job.

**Q. Was Evan always going to be the second choice today, and was Wimsatt unavailable?**

GREG SCHIANO: No, Wimsatt was available. We go into the game with a plan, and I'm not going to go into too much of the why, Steve, because I really don't want people knowing how I think, but there's, obviously, a plan in each game. How we utilize the quarterbacks. How we utilize everybody. We spend a lot of time on personnel usage. That's just the way it played out this week.

**Q. If this is your last game, how would you view the success of the season overall, 5-7?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think that will be better next week sometime when we get together. Right now we just got licked pretty good, and I'm hurting too. I really wanted to do that for those kids that have been through -- you think about what they've been through, right? Some really bad seasons, some tough seasons. Then they go through COVID. It's been a heck of a run for this group of kids.

I just thought if we could send them out of here the right way, it would -- you know what, as I said all the time to our team, that group on the other sideline, they think they deserve the same thing. We just didn't get it done today, coaches, players, all of us. We didn't coach well enough. We didn't play well enough.

**Q. What's the next step with the players? I know you have some guys that could come back, that could leave. Do you interview them this week? How are you going to go about it?**

GREG SCHIANO: We're going to definitely have talks, but it's also going to be on-the-road recruiting. This is a critical



time. We have literally two weeks plus a weekend next weekend and a weekend the following weekend, basically 14 days, and then the recruiting period goes dead, so it's -- a lot of people say, well, the season is through. Now you can -- no. The season is through, and now you've got to sprint harder until you get to signing date on the 15th, and the signing date is -- people call it the early signing date. It's not. It's the signing date. If they want to name something, they call the old one the late signing date. We've got a lot of work to do between now and the 15th.

**Q. With Noah, have you come close earlier in the season to pulling him with all the hits?**

GREG SCHIANO: I'm not going to get into how my thinking goes with that, but I look at every kid like my son. I use that as my barometer. Is barometer the right word? I guess that's the right word. If I would have played my three sons in that situation, then I would play him. If I wouldn't, then I wouldn't. Nothing is more important than those kids, those players.

**Q. Overall how do you feel about the quarterback situation going into next year? Do you feel like you solved that position?**

GREG SCHIANO: Again, Steve, I think that's a question for next week. I am encouraged by the room. I think we got a really good room of not only players, but people, and I think that -- the reason you're asking the question, and it's a great question, because that's the position that drives the program, right? Let's call it like it is. There's no position in any sport more important than that one. Some would argue the pitcher would be. I disagree. He goes one every five days. This guy goes every day.

It's an important position. I'll talk more about kind of positions and how we feel about them when I have some time to just think. The first thing I do -- and I'm not really looking forward to it -- is I evaluate myself. Last year, as I told you guys, I can't even tell you that I did it as thoroughly as I always do last year just because it was such a strange year, and I have said to you before, I didn't even think it was a real year. I thought it was who handled all the distractions the best had a better chance to win. This was a real season of football, and I'm going to evaluate, first, my performance and then work our way down and figure out what needs to change, what needs to stay the same, where we need to get better, where we haven't lived up to what our expectations are.

I think it's important that we all recognize that we are growing, we are building, and to be in November -- you know, think back to three, four years ago. To be in November and be playing for something would have been

pretty special. Now, that's relative to that. That's not our goal, but I'm doing it to say that it is going (indicating with hands notching up). It's never linear, as we know. It's always that little bit of that mountain range until you really get all the pieces in place, and when you get the pieces in place, then it kind of goes like that, but we're not there yet.

Certain position groups -- really every part of the organization we have to make sure that we get the right pieces in place in the right places, so I'm going to have to study everything and make sure we're doing what's best for Rutgers football.

**Q. Felter started today. We've asked you about it. What has he done the past few weeks, I guess, to get back in the line-up?**

GREG SCHIANO: He has improved. He has shown some spark and some -- it's all relative, right? I said at the beginning of the year, we'll go as far as the O-line can take us. I think it's been a work in progress all season, and certainly by having another combination.

Gus got banged up this week in practice, so we didn't really have him full go until this morning, and as a young player who doesn't have a lot of logged experience, we're not going to play him on one day's practice, so he was there for depth, but we weren't going to do that, so now we had a decision to make. Nick going back to center. What are we going to do at guard?

Look, we make the decisions, as I do all the time. What gives us the best chance to win today? That's every decision I make is based on that.

**Q. You're going to hit the recruiting trail. What about the team? I guess they wouldn't in practice this week in anticipation of whatever may lie ahead?**

GREG SCHIANO: I have a plan in place for our team. They need to rest right now, but that doesn't mean we're shutting her down. We've got work to do. When I first arrived here years ago in December of 2000, I'll never forget, I called some of the players, and I said, what do you guys -- what were you planning on doing? Well, this is finals time.

Now, mind you, it wasn't finals time. Finals weren't for two weeks. I said, finals time? I said, you are telling me you study the whole time? That's baloney. We need to work out. We need to continue to train. We need to continue to do the things because the programs that we're chasing, they're practicing, so we will have our December plan in place, and then when we get to finals, we'll adjust it accordingly. Then they'll get a rest regardless of what

happens, and then we'll start back in January, so there's contingency plans for everything, but it's clearly marked.

We've done this a few times, and it will be done efficiently in the right way, but, again, guys, I appreciate your coverage all year. It's been some highs and some lows and some good times but you guys have all been good. You've been professional. You've been fair. I really appreciate that. I know that that's not the way it is everywhere, so thank you very much.

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