

Rutgers University Football

Media Conference

Friday, April 22, 2022

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Postgame Press Conference

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I appreciate you coming out tonight, guys. It's a really good chance to get out under the lights. Let the guys play a little bit. Thought we had a great turnout from our fans, which is excellent. It's a lot of fun to have everybody here and great turnout with recruits and all those kind of things. So overall, a really productive night and a very productive spring. And now we've got to wrap it up with final exams and we'll get into the summer.

So with that, I'll open it up for questions.

Q. What's your overall impressions of what you saw down on the field offensively and defensively?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it's tough, you know, because you divide the team. So everybody's mixed and matched, and you try to make it as competitive as possible, so -- at least we do. I wanted to see some guys compete against each other. And then we have some play limits on guys, too.

So some guys had 25-play pitch counts. Some had 35 plays, and once they hit it, they were done. Doesn't matter when it was or where. I was scared there at the end but I think Jamier Collins is fine. But that would have been a horrible shame, last play of the game, right, or second-to-last I should say.

But it was cool at the end there when we did the play and all our players were involved. That was special. That's the kind of stuff that I love to see our team, the impact they can have on young people, and I think it's a great lesson for them that they can have that impact and if they are smart about it, they can use that platform to really help a lot of people.

Q. What's your initial assessment of the quarterback play?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it was very similar to what I thought all spring. I thought it was really good at times and then inconsistent at times.

We need to have a great summer. And you know, the hard



thing about spring is you're on, you're off, you're on, you're off. These guys in the summertime, they throw with each other every day on their own, and that's really where the formulation of the chemistry I think occurs. No coaches, just them, running the show.

We'll take a little jump here into recruiting and some other things. But I really am excited about this group going into the training camp part of our preparation, because they are young and they are hungry and they have got a lot to learn but they are really trying to learn it. That's exciting for a coach.

Q. Your two transfer wide receivers, Sean Ryan and Taj Harris, led each team in receiving. How did you think each of them did, and what do you think of their springs and what do you expect to see from them in the summer and into the fall?

GREG SCHIANO: I think they are really going to help us. You know, they come in, they join Shameen, and then a host of other guys. We lose a really fine player in Bo as he leaves for the NFL. And I think it's really important that what we did through the portal, supplementing what we already have here. We have some young receivers that are going to be really good but they make take a little while to get there. To have some experienced guys on the squad now that, helps a lot.

Q. What have you liked about Ireland Brown at center and what he's done at that position in the spring?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I really think -- you know, Ireland started the year, the spring at guard. After four practices, we made the move to center. We just thought that he had that kind of fast twitch, and he does. I mean, I think he can be as good as he wants to be. He really improved quite a bit. He did a good job the first four practices but from practice five on, he really picked it up.

You know, centers, people kind of take it for granted, especially in a shotgun offense. They just take that snap for granted. Well, that's not the easiest thing in the world. If that's all you had to do, it's easy. But you have to snap it, and then you have to block somebody, and that other guy doesn't have to snap it. He just has to get off on ball. It's



really a lot harder than people think. So you've really got to be a pretty good athlete to do it, and with he and Gus, I think we have some good depth at the position now.

Q. (Salaam) the redshirt had some big runs tonight. Talk about his development and what you expect from him.

GREG SCHIANO: Sure, Al-Shadee Salaam, haven't seen a lot of him because he was redshirting, as you said and had some injuries at the end of the year. But he's very talented guy. Really talented. Fast, explosive, and we just have to make sure we find ways to get him involved.

And he's going to earn those touches. I think between he and Kyle; Kyle I thought had a really good night as well running the football. You know, we'll get Aaron back and you have some depth there. That's Ja; if he can stay healthy, Ja has a chance to really compete there, too.

So I like our running back room. It's just going to be fine tuning it and really learning the little details of playing the position.

Q. Seemed like destined for a lot of points, two touchdowns in the first two drives. What changed after that?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a great question. I'm anxious to -- who am I -- I'm not going to look at it tonight but I am going to look at it this weekend and see what changed.

My hunch would be as we started the game, then we started rotating people. So we already divided the teams and then after two series, I want to make sure everybody gets enough reps.

My thing, the spring game, is, yes, the lights are on, and we get to evaluate people that are playing in a game atmosphere. But spring is hard. It's 14 practices and it covers a long period of time because we are on and we're off, we're on and we're off.

So I wanted to make sure that everybody got the reward. Everyone that was healthy got the reward of playing in the spring game. So all five of the quarterbacks got plenty of reps, every receiver, every position got reps. Every lineman, every kid that was able to play in the game; every player that was able to play, played.

So when you start really mixing and matching, I think the product dips a little bit. But there's other reasons, too, I'm sure that I'll see on the video.

Q. What did you see from Austin Dean and Anthony

Johnson and the way they played. Was there any encouraging signs about what they can do there?

GREG SCHIANO: They have done a good job all spring. They are on-the-job training, right. Especially Anthony, I mean, really, he graduates high school in a couple weeks.

They are both natural linebackers. They are instinctual. They have got a lot to learn but I think that's definitely a thin part on our roster right now.

I don't know yet with Mo. It's going to be probably a few weeks now before we know. So it's either going to be he's going to be able to play, or he's going to get surgery and that will be it for the season.

But the doctors just informed us today that we are going to have to wait a few weeks to know that, which is fine because once you do the surgery it doesn't matter. He's done for the season. So say our prayers.

Q. Unrelated to the game, but AD Pat Hobbs got an extension announced today; your thoughts on the news of date?

GREG SCHIANO: Oh, I think it's great. I think continuity here with people that work well together, you know, Pat's been here I don't know how many years now, but he's done a great job and I think he's got all our -- you just look what's happening with baseball, both lacrosses, what happened with basketball, and I know I'll leave somebody out if I start mentioning everybody.

But you look at the Rutgers athletic department, it's going like this (indicating upward trajectory) and the leader of that department is Pat. I'm very happy for him. He deserves it. What we need to do is get this operation cooking because this is the one that, as we know, can really push everything up even faster.

But everybody's locked. Everybody in this athletic department at this university, including our president, who got underneath that punt and fielded it right there at the beginning of the half. That was unbelievable. I have got to tip my hat to him. There are not a lot of people our age that can get underneath that and catch that punt, especially the ones Adam hits at night. I'm sure President Holloway was not practicing punt catching. He does not have the time to do that, right.

Right from the very top, all the way through our athletic administration down to the coaches and players, I think this athletic department is in a good place, and it's only going to get better. So I'm thrilled for Pat and thrilled for our department.

Q. With the spring awards, you talked about Ireland, but can you talk about what led you to choose Matt and Deion for the other awards?

GREG SCHIANO: Sure. Matt played this entire spring in a lot of pain but he knows he's going to have to have a procedure done at the end of the spring, and he'll be fine. You know, probably somewhere middle of June back to normal. But he could do the spring with it, and it got worse as spring went on. But he's going to go get the procedure and he's going to be fine. And all he did was go out to practice every day and just give it up for this team. We were down, oh, at one point, well, tonight, we only had four tight ends on the roster. The rest of them were injured or recovering from injury.

So there was a couple times when Matt laid out for catches and I didn't think he was going to get up, and he said, give me a minute and he got up and gave them a minute and he was okay. I knew he was in pain. But that's part of our game, right. There's a difference between playing with pain and playing with injury. If you're not going to hurt it worse, then you know you're going to need the procedure. Matt made the decision to help the team, and I thought that was really, really big of him and especially a guy who has got game experience. I mean, Matt's got a lot of snaps under his belt and he did it for the team.

Then, Deion. Deion is a really talented guy. Deion had some bad luck with the injury. Then he needed the surgery, so he missed the whole spring, last spring. He's really made big improvement and I think he's a Big Ten linebacker, I do. I think he's going to have a really good season. We need all hands on deck. That room right now is light with the injuries.

We are hopeful that Mo can come back but he may not be able to and we're preparing as if he's not and if he does, that's going to be great. So we're going to try to uncover every -- tougher over every stone and see whether it's outside our program or even inside our program to make sure we have the ample linebacker depth to go compete for a whole Big Ten season.

But Deion is definitely right in the middle of those plans and he's really made huge improvements in our 14 practices. I have no idea if he played well tonight or not. I didn't really watch him but he sure did have 14 good practices.

Guys, you appreciate you coming out. Appreciate you covering us this spring. You guys have a great summer and we'll see you at training camp.

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