

Rutgers University Football

Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference



Q. You played Temple last year but with a new coach, can you tell us about this team this year you'll be facing.

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I look at Temple. You can see, I've known Stan for a long time, Coach Drayton, he's an excellent football coach. He's been at the highest level, National Football League, National Championships. Stan knows how to prepare a team.

You can see that they are getting the better. You can see there's an identity to their team, what they are going to be, what he wants them to be.

So you know, I know, as always, there's a lot of guys on that Temple team that would have liked to come to Rutgers, right. So when you play a team that has a chip on their shoulder, it's a challenge.

So when you go back and watch that game last year, you say, well, the score was what it was. I mean, that score was not indicative of on what that game was. That score was based on takeaways. We struggled to move the football against their defense, and I think their defense is playing well again.

Yeah, it's something that we are getting ready for. They do some things that are a little bit different, so that's challenging and then obviously in the special teams realm, Coach Shire knows intimately what we do, and so we have got to make sure that we button it all up and make sure that there's nothing that he can take advantage of from his knowledge of what we do.

Q. What have you seen from Gavin in terms of the way he's navigating the ups and downs of the early part of his development and processing mistakes, learning from them, things like that?

GREG SCHIANO: I think there's no doubt both he and Evan are both getting better in leaps and bounds, right, and how can you not when you go through that process and you play in live games.

He wished he could have that interception back. It was similar to the one at BC. That's what he and I talked about, there's enough mistakes out there, to make new ones every week; we don't want to make the same ones.

But then again, you look at what he does on that one touchdown throw. I mean, that was a laser beam, right, and then when he runs the football, he's a threat every time the ball is snapped and it's in his hands. He's a threat. You'd better defend him. You'd better have a guy accounted for, him because if you don't, he has the ability to take it a long way.

I see him getting better. Again, I don't want to rush the process, though. I think they are both playing well and we just have to let them keep playing and eventually this thing will work itself out. It's just not now.

Q. Rochelle got some snaps at running back. He's listed as wide receiver. Is it fair to see, could see him in an Aron Cruickshank role, and offensive weapon that can do different things with the ball in his hand?

GREG SCHIANO: I think that's a very good assessment of who he is. He's a very good athlete and is dangerous with the ball in his hand.

So we've been working him at both positions with AY down, we kind of more heavily favor him towards running back, and I think he's going to be a really good receiver, too, as he grows and spends more time with JB in the weight room and all those things.

He's already changed his body a little bit but I can see this guy being just a little muscle man out there that can really run and that's going to be the key because he's going to get hit, right. So we are working to get that done.

Q. I understand you don't want to dive too much into Noah's injury, but is there a game or at least a timeline for when you are expecting him to get back on the practice field or game situation?

GREG SCHIANO: No, not really. He is progressing so he's doing more things this week than he did last week. It's



all going to be, okay, how does this go this week. If this goes well, then he keeps progressing onward.

It's still too early to tell. Can he play this week? I don't know. It's all going to depend on Tuesday and Wednesday, how fast he progresses. But look, we are just playing it by ear. But I don't have like a landmark, this game is when I expect him, no.

Q. You started with the same five offensive linemen this week. Is it safe to say those are the Top-5? And we saw quite a bit of a youth movement this past weekend. How is the unit as a whole developing?

GREG SCHIANO: I think when you talk about five, you have to clue Mike Ciaffoni in there so make it six. We have six. Our opinion as a staff we have six starting offensive linemen.

Could it be the other way around? Sure, it can, it's very close but they all play a great deal inside. We have kind of a three-man rotation going there. I like that. I'd like to see where we get a rotation going at tackle. We are not quite there yet.

I think CJ Hanson is coming on. I think Kamar Missouri is coming on. If those guys keep coming now we can get into a little more rotation at the tackle spot, too. But that's kind of just like at quarterback, at tackle, at guard, I'd like to do it some at center. I'd like to keep playing more and more people, just philosophically, I think that's what college football is becoming.

You know, you have to make sure that everybody gets to play. I think they prepare better that way. So we are going to make every attempt to do that but not at the cost of winning the game. That's not always going to be the ultimate level.

Q. I know you're focused on Temple, but to look a little ahead, Big Ten announced the Big Ten opener is going to be a night game and your first night game since the fans came back. What's your thoughts on night games?

GREG SCHIANO: I think your first part was exactly where I am: I am totally focused on one thing, and that's a two o'clock kick at Lincoln Financial Field. God willing, I'm still around, then we'll talk about that next week.

But I am really excited about two o'clock at Lincoln Financial Field, though. I've already heard and I don't know how accurate it is, but I hear there's 14 to 20 buses full of Rutgers students going down. And I know our fans, after watching that BC turnout, the way our fans showed up

at Boston, I really anticipate we are going to have a heck of a Rutgers turnout down at Lincoln Financial Field. Great stadium, great venue and I hear there's pep rallies everything and else. I love it. Let's paint that place Scarlet. They are cherry, right? So let's paint it Scarlet.

Q. Can you talk about the rotation at cornerback?

GREG SCHIANO: You said cornerback, right? Yeah. I really think that we have many good corners on our team. Certainly Robert is playing at a very high level. I think Max is capable of playing even better than he is. He's playing well. I think Max can play -- there's another level for Max. I expect to see that this weekend.

And then Bras, I think is really playing at a high level as well. Kessawn Abraham is playing at a high level. There's a guy in the wings waiting, Carnell Davis who I think is going to be a good corner, as well.

We have some young guys that we are developing but we have these four guys that are playing right now and I think doing a good job. We'll keep rotating. Again, to the whole philosophy of let's keep playing a lot of people, as long as you have guys that can win the game, make sure they are all in there.

Q. What's stood out about Al-Shadee?

GREG SCHIANO: I think the same thing you see, I see. When he touches the ball, we all kind of hold our breath. He has a different gear than people we have had around here. Al-Shadee is legitimately fast, fast. But so is Rochelle. Who asked about Rashad? Yeah, I mean, he's got another gear, too.

One thing I am excited about is our team speed is markedly getting better each year. You know, I just believe speed, I don't like to say speed kills, I think that's corny but I think speed is hugely effective in the game of football when you have fast people. They cover up mistakes well and allow you to take advantage of things well and we'll continue to hunt that at every position.

Q. Any injury updates on Aron or Matt Alaimo?

GREG SCHIANO: Aron and Matt are getting better. I don't know if they will be available Saturday. That's still -- we are waiting to see. Those are two key buys for us that we were counting on to play a lot of football. I hope we get them back but never at the cost of their well being, so that's on the doctors and the trainers and the medical staff.

Q. To piggyback on that, what does the running back depth chart look like when Aron does get back?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know. It's definitely a work-in-progress right now.

Right now, you can legitimately say there's two, maybe three guys getting touches, right. Sam I think showed what he can do. We have seen that in camp and in practice but now you guys got to see a little bit of it.

Yeah, it's a good running back room, that's what I like and we have to make sure that we play to each guy's strengths, you can do that if you're organized and make sure you have the right guys in to do things for their strengths, and as they improve their weaknesses, they can they can do it.

All but I think it's important that Coach Aurich is doing a great job with the running backs, he really. Is he has them all playing at a high level, high level of understanding, especially for young kids, with the exception of Kyle who really -- he is not exactly an old guy, but he's played some football around here. The rest of them are young pups and they are doing a good job. They are executing their assignments for the most part, that's a positive.

See you down in Philly, guys, or I'll see you before that but let's get as many people down there as we can. Thanks.

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