

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Monday, September 26, 2022

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Press Conference

GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for showing up. Try to answer anything I can.

Before I do that, though, I do have a special congratulations. I think we all know that Pat and his wife, Candice, they had a beautiful baby girl, Juliette, I understand is the name. I want to congratulate them. That's awesome. Look forward to getting you back, pat.

So why don't we go from there.

Q. Place to start, quarterbacks, how are Gavin and Noah doing? What's their status entering the week?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we are going to see as the week goes on. They are both progressing.

So what that means by end of the week, I don't know what that means in practice rep, I don't know. I'll know more probably tomorrow. But we'll continue on as we're doing, right. We'll just keep trying to improve with whoever is available.

Q. When it comes to Saturday, how much do you factor in the level of opponent, historic results against this team and playing those quarterbacks, and their health, how much do you value risk their health?

GREG SCHIANO: I'll never risk their health, I don't care who we are playing. Their health always first and foremost to me.

We are going to win the game. That's what we're doing. We're going to Columbus to win the game. Will that happen? You know there's another team on the other sideline that wants the same thing.

That's why goals are overrated in my opinion. We both have the same goal at the beginning of many game. But we are going to do everything we can, we are going to practice and get ready and go out to Columbus and play our best.



Q. Seeing C.J. on film, how does he compare to last year, and are there ways he's elevated his game with the experience?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, he's been through a lot more football games and seen a lot more defenses, including his own. What he's going against now is some high-level stuff. So when you go against that every day in practice, I think it sharpens -- iron sharpens iron a little bit there.

Yeah, he's an elite level quarterback for sure.

Q. How much of Noah's injury affected what you wanted to do with quarterbacks this year in bringing those two young guys along?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, we played with one scholarship quarterback in our opening Big Ten game. And I think the quarterbacks are part of it.

But I think we just got to look at, and I had to stop for a minute after Saturday night because it was maddening, and I had to just take a step back and say, wait a minute.

So we are playing with one scholarship quarterback, our top sacker of the first two years has missed a whole season, and yet we are playing really well on defense. There's a lot of good stuff going on.

And maybe we, by doing some things, raise the expectation of everybody, fan base included and that's a good thing. That's why we sold that place out the other night. That's why there was an excitement but I can't let that affect.

When I took the job, I told you, it's not going to be a linear straight shot and we had some injuries that set us back, some different things, right, some top -- one of our top recruits injured his knee and was unable to play this year.

So I want to make sure that we stay focused on the main thing, and that's getting better, and eventually as we get better and better, that will translate into more and more wins.

But the quarterback is definitely part of it. You know, when



Noah went down, there's your experience guy, he's got 20, whatever starts under his belt, and that's a nice thing to have to bring the other guys in and see how it all fits together. Once we lose that option, now it's young guys.

So to go out and win the first ballgame at BC and then continue on to win a couple with young quarterbacks, that's good, right. Was it all stellar play? No. But I don't expect it to be when there's very little to know experience there.

But now we are in Big Ten play, and I thought we did some good things offensively. We just turned the ball over twice, and I say just. That's the story of the game.

So yeah, does that have a factor? Sure it does. But our quarterbacks didn't turn it over on the one. We didn't miss the flare route on that drive when we cut it to two scores. The quarterbacks didn't do that.

So it's collective, and I think the focus, we focus -- our guys play really hard. It's the consistency, as you're building a program, the last thing that comes is consistency.

So when you can do it at first and you see it, okay, now we've done it. But now can we do it down after down after down? And when you get good, you can do that. Your team can do that. The quarterbacks are part of it. It's across the whole team.

Q. Just to follow up real quick on the quarterbacks. Since you will lose Noah, the experience guy, will you have to look to replace someone with more experience in the off-season through the portal?

GREG SCHIANO: That's down the road. I think all of that comes out of the guys that you're developing, how do they develop, right. If you end the season a certain way with your quarterback situation, then that's less important. If you don't, then it's more important.

Everything to me is a fluid situation and you have to look at it as such. That's why people, you know, this he want to lay down these mandates of this, this and this. How do you know? You don't. They are human beings and they are going to go out and play. The switch is going to flip at some point and all of a sudden, well, they are set for a few years here, let's go. So we'll figure it out as we go. I'm optimistic, though.

Q. Now that you have four games to evaluate, what's your overall assessment of the offensive line?

GREG SCHIANO: Improved. Not where we need to be but much improved, actually.

There was some things that we've done in the first four weeks that so we had no chance of doing the first two years. So that's a good thing.

Again, we keep stepping up in competition. That defensive front was stout and there was a lot of them last week, and it's going to be the same this week. So get used to it. That's Big Ten football, right.

I think we saw eight or nine D-Linemen rolled in last week. We'll see the same this week. So yeah, it's what the Big Ten is about. That's why it's the best league in the country.

Q. When you went back and watched the tape, what did you see from Simon in terms of growth and mistakes of learning maybe throughout a game?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, a lot. You know, I think one thing you can say, he is a tough son of a gun now. He stood in there and made some throws and as he was letting it go, he was getting hit but he didn't flinch. You know, you can't teach that, and the reality is, to try to keep your -- it didn't work so well but to try to keep your quarterbacks healthy, they have a green jersey on and they don't get hit in preseason. When do you know? You know when they get hit in the game how tough are they. I would tell that you all three of our quarterbacks are tough guys. They don't flinch, they hang in there and they are not afraid to run the ball. That was a big step.

The other thing I thought, when we went no-huddle, I thought Evan looked very comfortable. He had command of the situation. And that's another one that you don't know until you do it, right. So that was good to see. So that was a positive.

Q. Big picture, Ohio State, you have been there and you know what that program has; do the changes in the sport in college football with NIL and where it's going, does it make it harder to catch that program? Do they have more advantages?

GREG SCHIANO: It all depends what you do. It's an opportunity, as I look at it, to close the gap if we, in fact, have those resources. It's a different way of thinking, and it's a sudden change (snapping fingers). So do your supporters, do your boosters, do your local businesses, do they feel the need, is it that important to them, to step up?

Well, it can become an advantage for us. It can become actually a way to close the gap more quickly but it all depends on what your individual community feels and then ultimately does.

Q. Aaron Young, is he getting closer?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

GREG SCHIANO: Aaron is improving, yes and boy, we have missed him, right. He's a multi dimensional guy. He does it on teams, he does it on running back and he does it at receiver. That's another guy -- that's why I had to really pump the brakes myself, because I was really frustrated, as you can tell Saturday night and I don't have accept it and I don't make excuses, but I have to live in reality.

When you look at some of the quality, experienced players that weren't playing, and yet we were battling and felt really other than a couple of mistakes, were right there, that's a huge profit. Huge improvement. But then we jump up in class again, right.

So if Iowa is one -- or if Iowa is 1-A, Ohio is 1, they are third ranked, second ranked, whatever rank in the country for a reason. As Steve said, I have been there, I understand the culture, I understand the program and I understand the level of talent. For us to have an opportunity to win this game, we have to be consistent, we have to be at our best consistently. I just got done telling you, that's the last thing to come.

But you know what, the challenge is great, and that's what I love about it league, so I'm looking forward to it.

Q. When you came back for the second time, the gap between Ohio State and this program was vast. Do you feel like in the three years you've made a significant -- you were able to significantly close the gap and is a game against Ohio State, is it a fair measuring stick for the program in the three years?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know if there's a measuring stick right now with a program that's established that way. I don't know that. It depends how we play, right. It will be a great measuring stick if we play well.

But if you play poorly against a team like Ohio State, it really gets exposed, right. So you go play poorly against a good team, you might not look great. You play poorly against them and it's a matter of how many, what is the difference.

So we need to go out and play our best game and then some things go your way and again, the game is what you need to do. You need to hang in there, you need to play tough, and you keep looking up and there's still a chance and then you keep going and it gets tighter and tighter, and that's what you go in when you're a market under dog and that's where we are right now. We are not going to all be here, as a matter of fact, we are not always going to be in this position but it takes time. That's one thing, like I said, I had to do it myself first and then communicate it to people,

first my team and my staff and now publicly in that that's a lot of great improvement going on. We have lost some really valuable players as was mentioned today to injury, some of them will be coming back as we go. Some of them won't. Some of them will have to wait until next year to see. Overall the tide is definitely rising and we are going out to Columbus to play our very best game since we've been back and see where that puts us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...