

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Saturday, November 19, 2022

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Coach Greg Schiano

Postgame Press Conference

Penn State - 55, Rutgers - 10

Q. Where did things start to fall apart in your opinion?

COACH SCHIANO: We gave up 14 points and our defense hadn't given up anything. That doesn't help matters, right, to start the game -- kickoff return and then an offensive touchdown. So that doesn't help.

But as I've said to you guys before, our margin for error right now is not very big. So it's 14-10. Whatever you want to call it, we block a punt or the guy drops the snap because he's worried about it, whatever it is. We have a chance to have the ball at 14-10 on whatever yard line that was, 20-something. And they call us offsides. So that's kind of like the margin for error.

Every football game takes on a life of its own. If there was a critical point, you can't say that you can give up a kickoff return for a touchdown and a non-offensive touchdown and think you're playing well. But we have an opportunity to go back and seize the lead at that point. And that was kind of a margin of error. From there is where it turned. And that's where it took on a life of its own.

We're not quite good enough yet to overcome that margin. We've just got to keep working until we do.

Q. Are you still at the point where you look at the program, though, and say I still see good things coming?

COACH SCHIANO: 100 percent. I've told you, I see so much promise out of these players. And it's never a linear ascent when you're building a program, whether it's an individual or it's a program itself. It never goes like this. There's always ups and downs. And we'll just keep going. As long as you don't turn around and quit, you're fine. You'll get there. I have that confidence.

Q. What did you see from Gavin?

COACH SCHIANO: Gavin was a little sped up tonight.



And what do I mean by that? I'm not sure. I want to watch the tape. He wasn't as process driven as he was a week ago. Now some of that has to do with the defense. Some of it has to do with the run game a week ago, kind of put us in better positions.

But still, we didn't do a good enough job getting him ready, because when he sped up, he wasn't as good as he can be. So that's part of it.

Again, individuals and programmatically, it's not going to be a -- he had a really fine game last week. He took a step that way and I really believe he'll go this way. There's some lessons he learned in that game that I'm sure he'll never make those mistakes again.

The one interception he has Sean Ryan for a touchdown. He's got him beat by three steps. And he tries to kind of just lay it in there. In one of the conversations we have all the time is you've got to drive every ball.

So it's the same old deal with your kids. Don't touch the stove, it's hot. Sometimes they've got to touch the stove, okay, that should never happen again.

Q. Those self-inflicted mistakes, the offsides on special teams, the turnovers on offense. You've talked about wanting to get better throughout the season. It's mid-November and those mistakes just keep happening --

COACH SCHIANO: The penalties, I'm not there with you on that. We've had some issues this year. Tonight, that wasn't the issue on special teams.

Turnovers for sure -- you can't turn the ball over against a good football team and expect to win. Not fitting a kickoff return properly, that certainly is an issue, but it wasn't that tonight on special teams.

Q. On the offside penalty, seemed like you were having a pretty animated conversation with the official after that. Was there anything in particular?

COACH SCHIANO: I didn't see it the same way, I guess. You wouldn't do it if you were in agreement. I wouldn't be



congratulating that way.

Q. What adjustments if any do you think needs to be happening on special teams?

COACH SCHIANO: Well, certainly on kickoff. We have two kickoffs returned for touchdowns this year. And the that falls on me because I'm the head coach and that can't happen. So I have to do some real deep dive on that.

I know why it happened tonight. But why was it -- why did that happen? We know that could happen if you do what we did, and yet it happened.

So that falls 100 percent on me. I'm in charge of all those things and I didn't do a good enough job of making sure that we were doing the things that we needed to do to be successful on those teams.

Q. As long as you're in this division you'll be measured against Ohio State, Michigan State and Penn State. Do you think you closed the gap on those teams?

COACH SCHIANO: I do. I think those teams continue to get better. I know they do. You remember Jim, they were ready to run him out of town a few years ago. Now he's about ready to go to the playoffs. He's got the showdown next week.

The same thing could be said for James over there. There was a time when all the writers wrote about was he's a .500. Now they've all improved.

And Ohio State, they've been good for a while. Those three teams have gotten better.

As I said when I took the job, we are chasing a moving target and really we're chasing moving targets.

And just because when the divisions end a year from now, you're still competing for the same championship. If you ever are here and you're not competing for the championship, then you probably ought to go find an island somewhere and call it a day. We'll be competing for the championship. I'm confident of that.

I said it: We'll be a better football team and we are a better football team than we were at the beginning of the year. We have had a lot of things go on this year that kind of just get glossed over.

I was sitting with the trainers yesterday and talking about, all right, at the end of the year we've got to get the surgeries all lined up. There's only three of them.

I said that's the best I can remember. He said, yes, coach, because we had 11 of them since spring football, 11 surgeries.

We've had an uphill climb, which there's no excuses, but it is what it is. As I told you, our margin for error is slim.

Today we started out looking like a really good football team and then it caught up to us. So we don't have right now as much as we need to get it done. We will. I'm confident.

Q. Seems like when the mistakes happen, they kind of just come in an avalanche. I'm wondering what the cause of that is. And it seems like the team kind of unravels quickly. How do you stop that from happening?

COACH SCHIANO: You know what, I think it really has to do with who you're playing. Like Penn State has improved -- they may be the most improved football team in the Big Ten this year. They've really made leaps and bounds, as I've watched them in crossover tape and things.

So when you make mistakes against a team of that quality, it does avalanche on you, for sure. When you make them against teams that aren't quite that level, kind of just gives the game a bad feel but it's not like that.

We have to figure out in what we do to continue to get better, that will take care of that eventually -- when you have more guys that are getting better. They're capable of playing in the Big Ten East. And then we're getting them better, we're coaching them better, all those things. And that's when that avalanche will stop. It's that margin of error I'm talking about.

Q. I know this isn't necessarily about the game itself but you had the decal, the moment of silence for the UVA players. Could you talk about that, coaching young men and what those moments mean for you, kind of big picture beyond the field?

COACH SCHIANO: It's really sad. Really, really sad that a team, a university, families have to deal with that. It seems so senseless. But certainly the young man who did it has real issues, real problems. I just feel for everybody involved. And it's sad.

We did, along with Penn State, had the same decal on our helmets. And as my wife said to me, you know, she showed me a picture of the kids, like any of your kids on your team.

And I just can't imagine what they're going through down there. It's awful. So our prayers are with them.

And the one thing that I do want to say here, I thought our fans were outstanding this year for Rutgers. I thought that we had tremendous turnout. Our students today were just off the chain. It was excellent.

And I promise them and I promise our fans, we will get there. As long as we don't do weary of doing good, we will get there. Just can't grow weary and say, oh, I can't do it. We can do it. Rutgers can do it. New Jersey can do it. We can do it. We just need to keep plowing ahead. And I promise you that's what we'll do.

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