

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Monday, November 21, 2022

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: All right. Maryland. They are a really talented football. Coach Locksley is doing a very good job. He's put together a group of players and coaches I think that really understand who they are and what they want to do. So it's going to be a huge challenge going on the road going down there to College Park.

And you look at them offensively, they are very talented. It starts with the quarterback. They are big on the offensive line, good receivers, run game.

. Defensively, they are very big on the front, and they mix it up. Do some three-down stuff, some four-down looks. Linebacker's tough, can run. Secondary, corners are really, really good players. Safeties are physical guys.

Special teams will challenge you in just about every area. So it will be a big test but ONE THAT that we are excited about going down and tackle.

So I will try to open for anything I can help you with.

Q. When you look at their quarterback, how do you feel like he compares to last year and is there any area you feel like he made considerable improvements in?

GREG SCHIANO: I thought he was good last year. He's just a little bit better version of who he is.

You know, he gets a lot of attention for his mobility and his ability to create plays but I think he's also a very good pocket passer and field general. Runs their offense with a great deal of confidence. It doesn't look like there's anything he's not comfortable with in what they are doing.

So he and Coach Locksley have a long relationship, and I think he's at the stage in his career where things are clicking for him.

Q. Can you just give us injury updates on a few guys, or do you just want me to go one by one?

GREG SCHIANO: You can go one by one.

Q. Brown?

GREG SCHIANO: We are going to have to wait and see. He's going to give it everything he's got to play in this game. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Deion looked like a game-time decision. I don't know if he played at all. How is he?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, it was. It came down to one, and we didn't feel like he was good enough to go.

Q. Quez (ph), he didn't dress for the fourth time in five games, something like that.

GREG SCHIANO: He's got an issue with -- lower extremity issue that he's just not quite there.

Q. Aaron Young and Rene Konga --

GREG SCHIANO: Rene Konga got hurt in the Michigan State game if you remember, and he's had surge and he's done for the year, lower extremity injury. And Aaron Young is done for the year. He's going to have to have a procedure here at the end of this week.

I don't think it's going to be a major one but they have to go in there and just take care of something.

So yeah, it's two guys that Aaron was coming on, he finally is starting to look like himself again, and so that's a shame.

And Rene Konga was really coming on. He was having one of these kind of seasons, very productive and showing what he's going to be. But just kind of push it down the road a little bit, and he'll heal and he'll be well.

Q. You talked about 11 surgeries after the game on Saturday. I know football is a violent game and all that, but is this more than you've ever dealt with? How does it compare to other seasons?

GREG SCHIANO: This is about as many as we've ever had, yeah in, 35 years. I've not seen it.



But you know what, that's the way it goes. Some years it's that way, and I think it usually balances itself out. So we'll hopefully do a year where we don't have a bunch of those. But it is what it is.

The guys that are playing are giving everything they have got and they are doing a heck of a job in their preparation. We are not quite there where we want to be. But as I told you guys Saturday after the game, we are a lot closer than maybe some people think.

You know, when you watch our game as a coach, there's some -- I say this, and I'm not sure guys truly understand what I mean, when every game takes on a life of its own.

We had plenty of opportunities in the first, I don't know, what you'd say, 20 minutes of that game to have a substantial lead, not a lead, at home. We just didn't do it.

So when we can do that, then we'll start winning those type of games. But until we do, that doesn't do me any good to stand up here and explain it away. It's our job to coach it and it's our players' jobs to execute it.

So we certainly both have to do that better. But I'm encouraged, I really am. I look at what's going on. We've got a lot of good stuff going on. So got to go win this game.

Q. Preparation-wise, is there anything you'll do differently to address maybe those areas where those miscues were? As you said, the margin for error is very thin.

GREG SCHIANO: Like you always do, you evaluate the tape. You see where your issues were, and then you really try to determine first.

Like I think what a lot of people want to do is they just want to fix the behavior right away. Well, we are going to fix the behavior, right. When I say behavior, the execution.

My question always to the players and the coaches is, why? Like why did we do it? We went into the game thinking we knew how to do it and we would do it, and we didn't. Okay, so why in and it comes down to a couple things: Either we didn't coach it well enough, so there was a misunderstanding; they didn't learn it well enough and there was a misunderstanding; or they didn't execute it because of, why, right. Was it nerves? Was it beginners, going through it the first time, was it the opponent, that guy is too good, I can't do it against him.

So we really classify things as we evaluate and some day we can sit down and I'll show you. When a play is not

efficient, right, so we have all these efficiency models. When a play is not efficient, there's really only a few reasons. We call it scheme, which is bad by us, right. We put a scheme out there that didn't serve the players well, right. Execution, right. Player just didn't execute his job well enough, or mental, we made a mistake, right and you really try to break it down into those three reasons.

If it's an effort issue, shame on us. You shouldn't be on the field. We don't have effort issues, very rarely. But it boils down to one of those usually and some of the reasons why, that's telling you what -- what caused it, but then the why, why did that happen. That, to me is coaching. Getting down to the bottom of why and then how do we verbalize it better, how do we show them better on video, how do we teach it better in person with hands on. That's what we have to do.

So we do that every week and that's what I'm talking about, the continual growth of a program, but you know sometimes you feel like you don't have enough fingers to hold up the dike and sometimes when you get good, it's like, that was good. We did pretty good. Hey, we've got to get these two things cleaned up and let's go get it.

So we are not quite there yet, but we'll get there.

Q. How would you assess what you've gotten out of the wide receivers you overall this season?

GREG SCHIANO: Probably inconsistent. We made some really good plays, and then we've done some things that you, or really any fan, wouldn't notice, unless you're really a coach or a player. Things as simple as if I'm going to run a 9-route, which is a go out, I have to run it a certain way. If I'm going to run an 8-route, or if I want to run a 6-route, I've got to run those routes really technically sound.

Because all those things, depths, angles of entry, right, angles once you make the break, because that all ties hand-in-hand with the quarterback, and the quarterback ties all hand-in-hand with the protection.

So I have to wait for you to get there, well, the protection better hold up or else I'm going to get pushed off the spot or I'm going to get sacked, even worse.

Yeah, we need to be better this Saturday at that position group for sure.

Q. Do you consider Maryland a rival, and in that regard, where do you think your program stacks up against Maryland in terms of the big picture in this division?

GREG SCHIANO: I think they are a Big East -- Big East, there's a flashback. They are a Big Ten east team that is local, right. So either the closest -- they are probably closer than Penn State, really.

Do I consider them a rival? We haven't had -- we've had some good games, you know. We won one; they won one. So I think it could become one. I don't think we have enough history yet for it to become a rivalry.

Again, I always say this; that has to happen organically. There's got to be recruiting battles. There's got to be games, you know, back and forth and that kind of happens over time. We just haven't been in this league long enough and quite honestly two things. We haven't been in the league long enough and we haven't been good enough to make that happen. That will happen over time.

Q. It's been a little while since we've asked you about Sutton. How is he in his recovery, and is there a chance he could be a factor going into next season?

GREG SCHIANO: It's still up the in air. He had -- I've been around a lot of injuries in 35 years as you can imagine, right. He had one of the roughest, toughest injuries I've ever seen.

And he is an incredible warrior. That's all you can say about the guy. I see him work -- you know, this was, think back, that happened Michigan week 2021. So that's, what, Week 4, right? So we are in Week 12, Week 13 with the bye, a year later, and this guy is still coming in every day trying to get it right.

I pray for him, I really do. I hope that he can make it back because I know how badly he wants to but I think it's safe to say that's still up in the air.

Q. More of a big picture question, but the transfer portal opens; the window opens in two weeks. Do you feel, where you guys are at as a program, as a staff, athletic department equipped to retain players that are currently on the roster and be competitive mix for the top players in the market to bolster whatever you have on the roster?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think that's an acute issue for sure, right. You're looking at it right in the eye right now. December 5th is when the portal opens.

I don't know. I know we have some things going on. But it's going to be a critical part of the continue -- the continued growth of our program but it's not just our program, it's any program.

Do I think that this program is a little different in the way that we care for these guys and the way that there's an atmosphere in this building? I do. But I also think that if you have a young man who has an opportunity to make some substantial money, it's not easy to say no to.

So I think that we have to be able -- I don't know if we have to match people dollar-for-dollar, which even sounds funny to say, right, at a college press conference, but it is what it is. We had plenty of opportunities to avoid this issue as an NCAA and as a group of coaches and players, administrators over the years, and just, we failed. Now the legal system is telling everybody how it's done. It didn't have to be that way. But that's where we find ourselves.

So I'm really hopeful that the Rutgers faithful will get behind this because we need it. We're going to work our tail off as we always do in recruiting and evaluation. I think our staff does as good a job as -- better job than anybody in the country at really working at it and uncovering some guys that maybe people weren't aware of for one reason or another.

We have a lot of -- I used to call them stories. This guy came here -- this is a story. Didn't go just linear, high school, go sign. It always seems like we have a little bit of a story because our guys dig really deep, and we're going to have to keep doing that. But once you develop them, you need to be able to keep them.

I feel good about that but it's -- you can't ever in this environment, this landscape, you can't take anything for granted. You really have to stay on top of it but we will do that.

Thanks, guys.

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