

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference

GREG SCHIANO: Happy new year, guys. Good to see you.

Thanks for coming out. I'm glad we could get together here today. A couple things I want to go over.

First, congratulations to the basketball team. What a game yesterday, but really, things going in the right direction. Coach Pikiell and his team, they are a lot of fun to watch.

Eric LeGrand, New Jersey Sportscaster of the Year, great honor for him, and that's awesome. As you know, he's one of my guys, so really excited for him.

Probably the big announcement here, obviously you guys know is Kirk Ciarrocca coming back to be our offensive coordinator here at Rutgers, and I'm going to tell you guys the same thing that I told the recruits yesterday and that I'm going to tell the team tonight at our team meeting: I've never been more excited to be the head coach at Rutgers than I am tonight.

You know, with Kirk coming back and leading the offense and with Joe Harasymiak leading the defense, it doesn't get better than that. I've never had better than that at any level, National Football League, college, doesn't matter. These two guys are great teachers, great leaders, and, look, I can't wait to put it together with these guys. It's going to be really good.

So you know we did an exhaustive search. I told you it was going to take time, and when you do a search, there's a lot of reasons why it takes time. No. 1, talking to people but No. 2 they have things going, too. If you're going after the right people, they have other opportunities and they have things cooking in their life. But again, at the end of the day, if you get the right person, that's the most important, and I'll reiterate, never been more excited.

So I'll open it up to questions, but before I do, I want to thank Rutgers, the University administration for stepping up in a big way. As a head coach, you have to do what you think is best for the program, but you don't operate in a



vacuum.

And there's a lot of people that stepped up and when we talk about the support and what's needed to compete in the Big Ten Conference for championships -- the Rutgers administration understands and they are supportive and I can't thank them enough for that. It means a great deal to me and where we are headed.

With that, I'll open up to questions.

Q. Can you just talk about the process? You mentioned it, but what went into it, and how much did your previous relationship with Kirk help in that regard?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, the previous relationship helped a lot because we've been friends for a long time, and I know what kind of man he is, and I also know what kind of coach he is, so that was very, very important. The process is the process, right. I know what I believe we need at Rutgers, and Kirk is exactly what we need. I never get into -- it's a dangerous process to get into; oh, when did you see him and when did you -- because you know what, there's a lot of stuff that goes on that's sticky and not needed to be public, right. It's not public information.

But what I will share with you is this is exactly what we need now at Rutgers and that's why I'm so excited.

Q. What makes Kirk the right guy the way he runs offenses and the right person to lead your offense?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, that's a great question. I said it, he's a great developer of both coaches and players. When you have a proven leader like Kirk, a guy that is -- what proves somebody? Results, right. When a guy has results.

We are in a result-driven business and when a guy has results. Well, how did he get the results? There's a lot of ways to get results. Is it just that a guy steps into a situation where he has better players than everybody? That's one way.

But that hasn't been the way Kirk has done it. Kirk has



trained coached. He's trained players. He's used the talent that he has and fit it into the system. The nice thing about Kirk's system, it has a lot of flexibility, right. If we have this, then we are going to do that. If we don't, and we have this, then we are going to -- it really emphasizes the things that we are strong at, and it kind of de-emphasizes until we can get the weaknesses to be better, it de-emphasizes that.

But it really isn't -- there's a lot of good scheme coaches out there. It isn't scheme. It's development. It's leadership, right. You've got to develop guys. You've got to take them from where they are to where they want to be.

And I use this all the time with coaches and players and recruits, but the origin of the word "coach" is a horse-drawn buggy that takes people from where they are to where they want to be. There's no better description than that for Kirk.

Q. On the process, Kirk signed a contract extension with Minnesota early December, and you guys sign a month later. How did that impact the process as far as him as a candidate and how did that impact you guys trying to land him?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, that's starting to get into that detailed area that's a little sticky. I will tell you this: Nothing ever surprises me in coaching searches because I've been through it myself.

You guys remember, I took a job at midnight and gave it back at six in the morning. You never really know what happens in coaching because there's so many things that go into making that decision, right. Everybody thinks it's just football, the team. You know, everybody's got families.

Everybody's got relationships with coaches and players and there's so much that goes into it that I would hesitate to get into all the specifics because I don't think there's anyway to make it clear enough without having actually been in it.

But again, I'm just really, really excited about where we are headed. And look, there's no magic pill, I don't care how good a coaches, you don't just say, ohh, right (snapping fingers). It's going to be development, and we are going to do it the right way: Development of staff, development of players. And we are going to get better gradually, and just keep getting better and better and better.

Q. Can you talk about Kirk's development of young quarterbacks and what he's done in the past?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, that's a good question, Fooch. That's certainly something he's very good at in developing quarterbacks. We have some young quarterbacks, right,

so we need to develop them.

I think it's critical that within his system, there's different ways to help the quarterback, and what he has to do is he has to get to know our players, evaluate what we can and can't do, and then how to you help that guy that touches the ball every down. I think that's one of the things that he's best at.

Q. How involved do you think you'll be with the offense knowing you have a guy as experienced as do you with Kirk?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a really good question, too. It's something that was really important to me because I have a lot to do as a head coach of a Big Ten program. He and I have discussed the vision of the offense. We've discussed what we believe it's going to look like as we take the steps.

But I have a true professional in there, just like I do in the defensive room with Coach Harasymiak. I give these guys a lot of, I wouldn't say leeway; a lot of leadership runway with their staffs. I think it's very important that they are the leader -- I'm the leader of the whole program and we staff, meet and do things like that.

But when they are putting the stuff together, they really run as two independent operations under one umbrella, and I jump in with them, I talk with them but those are the leaders. And that's when I said the leadership in both the offensive and defensive room, I've never had it this strong.

Q. Fair to say Kirk will be calling plays?

GREG SCHIANO: Very fair. I didn't bring him here for me to call them, I'll tell you that.

Q. In October, you talked about complementary football when you made the decision to move in a different direction. How does Kirk's offense fit in with what you envision complementary football to look like?

GREG SCHIANO: I think not Kirk's offense; how does Kirk fit into complementary football. I think one of the things that he and I are most aligned on is it's about winning games.

So whatever you have to do to win the game, that's how you win the game. It may be you go out and throw for 500 yards, or maybe you do something differently. Whatever it takes to win the game.

And that's my job as the head coach is I've got to look at



the whole picture and talk with Joe and with Kirk and say, okay, this is how I think we win this game what do you guys think, yes, no, and we come to a conclusion, okay, this is how we are going to win this game this week.

And that's what complementary football is. When you do it as a program, it's different than if you have two guys as independent contractors that are just trying to do the best they can, right. That's noble but sometimes it doesn't fit together.

Q. Just in your initial conversations with Kirk throughout the interview process, did anything stand out to you about the way he's evolved as a coach? Have any of his philosophies have changed since the first time you had him with the experiences he's had over the last ten years?

GREG SCHIANO: Yes, I think that Kirk knows exactly how he wants to build an offense. And whether it's this play or that play, you know what he's going to look at what we have and figure -- but more importantly, how do you do it: The detail, the accountability, right, the commitment to what we are doing.

That's going to be I think what you see over time our players and our coaches are going to feel. Like this is the way we are doing it, and questioner going to get better and better and better, whatever this is. That's up to him and the staff when we figure out what we can and can't do. But whatever it is, the commitment and the accountability to doing that, that's going to be for sure.

Q. You talked about excitement about the coaching staff, what about NIL and the Knights of The Raritan and that aspect, because that's so important right now and what's going on besides the coaches.

GREG SCHIANO: It is. It's the way of college athletics, right now, the Knights of The Raritan have been unbelievable. The amount of work that gets done, and this is a labor of love for a lot of many people that are behind that.

I know there's been some matching things going on and a lot of the Rutgers faithful have stepped up in a big way, and we're grateful. But I'm grateful for the people that run the Knights of The Raritan because that's their time. They are volunteering their time to help us.

Like I said last time, I encourage our fans like I said last time, I encourage our fans and supporter to step up because it definitely is part of college football now. It's the way it is, and I know it's the same in college basketball. Whether you like it or not, there's a lot of different ways to

look at it, really, and I understand everybody's opinion, but it is what it is.

It is the way current college football is, and for us to compete in the Big Ten east, we need to have that support, and I'm grateful for the support that we've received.

Q. There's some vacancies in your offensive coaching staff, offensive line and tight end. How do you see that process playing out, and how involved will Kirk be in hiring coaches there?

GREG SCHIANO: Kirk will be very involved. Ultimately the head coach has to decide how it all fits together as a staff, chemistry, recruiting, all those things. But Kirk and I will work hand-in-hand to get that done.

And I think, again, we won't rush. We'll do whatever it takes to get the right person, but I think things are lining up where it will happen pretty quickly.

You know, right now, there's two more weeks where as coaches, we are out on the road recruiting and then you're back in the building with the players full time. You'd love for it to happen by then, but remember last year we made some hires that went past that.

I'm never going to sacrifice a week or two weeks. I'd rather get the right guy. If you're a couple weeks late, that's the way it is. But yeah, Kirk and I will work very closely and we'll get that worked out.

Again, I appreciate it. Mark it down, we're going to have a spring game on April 29th. It will be in conjunction with Rutgers Day, so it will be a great weekend. Looking forward to having a bunch of alums back on campus.

Again, we have some coaches that were here the first time we were here. I'm anxious to get some of our former players back here and really make a great weekend of it. So there's a lot to go on between now and then, but wanted everybody to put it on their calendars. Going to be a great weekend.

All right, guys, thank you.

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