

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: Before we get started, just take a moment to pay tribute to the over 3,000 people who lost their lives on this day 22 years ago. It's very personal, obviously, to us, being in our backyard and to the 37 Rutgers alums who lost their lives that day and their families. Our thoughts are with them. We don't forget.

So with that I'll open it up.

Q. Thoughts on Virginia Tech?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, they are a good football team. Defensively their front is stout. They have some linebackers that can really run. The secondary, the safeties punish you and the corners can run and cover. It's a good defensive football team.

Offensively, their quarterback is a really good player, he's an experienced player. He's strong arm, accurate arm and can beat you with his feet.

Running back, they have two of them that they play, 32 and 24, they are both good players.

Offensive line, big. They lost some receivers, I don't know -- one of them had surgery, so he's not going to play. I was familiar with him. We tried to recruit him in the portal. And then the other fellow, I don't know. Looked like he pulled up with a hamstring. So I don't know what his status will be.

They went and got some portal receivers. Sounds familiar. So that will be -- they lost their tight end for the season at the beginning of the year. But the two young kids that are playing are good players. One of them is kind of more of a receiver-type tight end. The other can do both.

Special teams, they are sound. You can see they have a true plan to what they are doing.

So yeah, it's a good football team. They lost a tough one to Purdue opening week. They took control of the game and really held control the whole game.

Yeah, we'll have our hands full.

Q. Through two games; there anything that you've seen or learned about your team that has changed your outlook, how high of a ceiling you can see for this team?

GREG SCHIANO: No. I had belief in our team from the beginning. Where that puts you us, you never know because you don't know what the competition is.

But I don't concern myself with that. I do see a group that trusts each other, and that was evident in our last game when things started to get away from us a little bit. As I told that you night, they came together and said, no, we've got a job to do, everybody go do your job and this is going to go where we want it to go and that's exactly what happened.

That to me is a belief for trust in each other that happens when you pay the price together over time. Not a year but over three and four years paying the price together over time and that's what I keep talking about, the pipeline. We're not there yet. We've got to fill that pipeline with guys that have paid the price together and they develop together but we're getting closer.

Q. You talked before the season about the defensive line, a lot of the players coming back. Through two weeks of play, now you have had a chance to see them on the field. What have you made of how the defensive line has played?

GREG SCHIANO: I think we played good. I think we can play much better. Probably not what you thought I'd say.

But I think we can play at a much higher level on a defensive front because I think we have enough depth for guys to be fresh and when you have guys that you have enough people to go out there and play and be fresh, then I expect, you know, darn near perfect execution. Fatigue is one of the things that can affect your execution. Obviously your opponent is the other.

Q. I know this has been a lingering issue but I just



wanted to ask you for where this Naseim Brantley thing is headed and whether you have any clarity on it?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't have clarity. As soon as I do, I'll let you know. I don't mind you asking. I wish I knew. But as soon as I do, you'll know it.

Q. Waiting on the NCAA?

GREG SCHIANO: NCAA purgatory, yes.

Q. Are there any updates on Tyler and Christian's status ahead of Virginia Tech?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, Tyler Needham, I'm going to -- I'm going to stick to the strategy of: If it's a season-ending injury, I'll let you guys know. If I'm not sure it is or it isn't, then I'll just refer to the availability report on Saturday just so that we have consistency.

But yeah, Tyler -- Tyler had a rough, rough deal on Saturday night but we'll see how he progresses.

Q. I know it's a very small sample size at this point, but the run defense has performed well. What's been the biggest key to Todd that and are there signs that it can be sustained over the course of a season?

GREG SCHIANO: I hope so but it's too early to call it. Playing run defense is a couple of things. No. 1, it's knowing your job, and then No. 2, it's chopping your job. You have to go chop your job. What does that consistent of? Playing with great technique, playing with great pad level in the front four. Having proper run fits by the linebackers everybody swarming the ball and when you get there, tackling well. We do that for the most part.

When things started to unravel a little, you saw we missed three tackles on one play that that's when I knew, all right, let's go. Let's get back to playing our brand of football. But that's what happens when things going to start rolling on and you that's where you have to be able to put the brakes on and go right back to technique, scheme, execution and effort.

Q. Just from the perspective of Gavin on Saturday, you talked about his performance, throwing away the ball but not the turnovers, but what have you seen leadership-wise and emotionally about how he conducted himself on Saturday that maybe showed that next step in his maturation?

GREG SCHIANO: I think in both games, he showed that he's stayed calm and he's been cool on the sideline. There

was a little stretch even with him Saturday night that it started to get away and he brought it back.

So I think that's a step; if you're looking for one that's unique to Saturday, that's what happened.

Q. What's it like with so much depth at running back? Is it a cursing and a blessing at the same time knowing you have all these guys you have to share the ball around?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, it's not a curse by any means because you don't have to share the ball around. That's what competition is. The guys who are playing the best are going to get the touches. The guys that are doing the best in practice, the guys that are carrying into the game, you know, we love to have that kind of depth at every position because with competition, the cream rises to the top.

Q. Can he March filled in for Tyler on Saturday, if Tyler can't go, is he the guy? What do you think of how he performed?

GREG SCHIANO: We'll see who the guy is. We'll figure that out. But yeah, that was the immediate plan Saturday night. But we are talking about as a staff right now, what's the best -- again, it's always to get the best five and then the sixth and the seventh and the eighth. We are spending time on that today as we game plan.

Q. (On the defensive line.)

GREG SCHIANO: Did some good things. Did some things that we can't do. If we do them, we'll get beat. But it's a critical position, because when I talked about the O-Line, I think their edge guys are dangerous and they can role them. That's one thing that I look at them, I see they roll eight guys, so they are going to be fresh up front, too. So we are really going to have been on point with our offensive line, because not only are they rolling but they roll their good players. Stout inside, really athletic outside. Probably the best edge players we have placed so far -- not probably; they are the best edge players we've faced all year.

Q. How do you feel that the offensive line has gelled? I know coming in with a new offensive line coach, how do you feel like that group has gelled through the first two weeks of the season.

GREG SCHIANO: We have made improvement, that's for sure. Are we anywhere close to where we need to be? No. Improvement is a relative term. We just have to keep getting better every week, that's the key. Keep getting

better. Doesn't matter who is out there, we have to be better. We have protected well. Given up one sack and part of that is the quarterback getting rid of it and knowing where he's going with it and the other part is the protection.

Q. You mentioned Virginia Tech has injuries, is there anything that changes when the top receivers are not active for the game?

GREG SCHIANO: Well they still have good receivers. I'm just staying these are the guys they bought in who are similar to kind of like we tried to do. But they still have good receivers. We won't change now we play, no.

Q. You got to play Virginia Tech three times before they left for the ACC your first time around two, thousand one through 2003. Anything stick from those three games at all? Just curious.

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, plenty of memories. Some good, some not so good. We never beat them, so that's not good. But we were at a different spot, though.

Q. I know you touched on this in your opening remarks, today, the anniversary, what were your memories of 22 years ago? I know you said you saw smoke on the field?

GREG SCHIANO: It's very personal. I lost neighbors from when I grew up in north Jersey. Yeah, it was very personal. We were meeting. It was -- we were meeting at third down. I remember I was up at the board, drawing on the board and one of the assistants came in and said a small plane hit one of the towers, and then as we know, ten minutes later or whatever it was, when everybody started to realize it wasn't a small plane and the second plane hit.

And we had a coach on the staff whose wife was working in New York, so he was scrambling, couldn't get ahold of her. We had two players whose parents worked in the World Trade Center by the grace of God didn't go to work that day. We had a bunch of people who had, obviously, connections.

It was scary. I remember we gathered the team together and they -- they wanted to stick together. They didn't want to go. They didn't want to leave the building. We knew Bob Mulcahy told me, "There's no game Saturday." Doesn't matter what anybody says, we were the first ones to cancel our game. Kind of obvious. Why I mean, you stand on our practice field, you can see the smoke.

But they wanted to go out and practice. I'll never forget that. No, let's go out and do something. They didn't want to just sit around. We wasn't out knowing we weren't

having a game but we went out and practiced and you know, the coach whose wife was working, he spent all his time trying to get ahold of her. It was scary for all of us, right, and especially in the proximity, having it be in our own backyard.

That's why I say, last year, what was it, two years ago, when we played at Syracuse -- was that last year? Two years ago. That special uniform that Adidas made for us which I was really nice, we were able to send those to the families.

I don't know if you remember, they had our names on the helmet and those were the people we could get ahold of and had permission to put their names on the helmet. We were able to send each one of them a commemorative jersey from the game which they were very grateful for.

As a country, I saw a sign the other day on the highway, it said, "Report any suspicion of terrorism," and it's something that we have to be constantly vigilant about. But I think we all know that that day changed our world, and -- for everybody, but especially for the people who lost loved ones.

I do want to talk -- I did it Saturday night, I want to do it again. I'm really proud of our student section. I think we are starting to get a little reputation of a student section that is a factor. Now that they have set the bar, we need them. I know our guys just appreciate the heck out of it so I want to thank them again and call to duty, what time is the game, 3:30 game, love to have them there again.

Thanks, guys.

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