

# Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference

Rutgers 52, Wagner 3

GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for sticking around.

Before we get started I wanted to wish all the people that have suffered through this flooding, I kind of live in a cave over here and they sent me some clips of New York and other parts of Jersey and my goodness, I didn't realize. So our thoughts and prayers are to all those people that are struggling right now.

Really good day. A day that we needed to go out and take care of business and we did. Some great things happened today. Probably my favorite part was when Reggie got to go in and play. We gave him a game ball, and he said a few words; and 738 days since his injury. He's the epitome of chop.

There was many times I talked him out of playing. I said, "Regg, come on, man, you're such a bright guy, you've got a bright future let's get going."

He said, "Coach, I've got to do this.

So that was a really special moment; I know for me, and our coaches and our teammates. So that was really cool.

So I'll open it up for questions.

#### **Q. What were some other takeaways from this game?**

GREG SCHIANO: We were five-for-five on fourth downs. I think we were seven-for-seven on red zone tries. That was a beautiful catch that JaQuae Jackson made, beautiful throw, beautiful catch. So there was some good stuff there.

Defensively, I don't know, what's the total yards, 106? That's a heck of a job. I felt bad, we gave up a kickoff return. The defense could have had a shutout which is hard to come by.

Yeah, there's some good stuff. Saw some younger players



in the fourth quarter. That's always good. We have some really talented young guys. We've just got to develop them.

#### **Q. 4-1 after your first month of the season. What do you feel like you've learned about your team at this point?**

GREG SCHIANO: That we're getting better. That they really, really want to get better, and they are learning how to do the things that winning teams do that nobody knows about, right. They are learning how to sleep correctly, get their rest. They are learning how to take care of themselves from a nutrition standpoint.

It's a long season, and I just got done telling them the rest of the way, it's Big Ten all the way and what I believe to be the best conference in the country.

It's going to be quite a run and just as I've told you guys before, we're 1-0 in the Wagner season. We'll take a breath, celebrate it, and then we're on to the Wisconsin season.

So it's the only way you can do it in my opinion.

#### **Q. How did you think Gavin did? He was in the game late in the third quarter; you guys are up six or seven scores. What was the thinking keeping him in the game at that moment?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I thought Gavin continues to improve. You know, there's certain things you can do with him. Certainly there's a risk, there's always a risk but he's got to play. He's a young quarterback. He's got to play.

You know, you didn't see him carrying the ball a lot; weren't going to put him in that spot but he did it himself a couple of times on some of those plays, which were pretty crafty of him. But no, he's got to play.

But it was good. I was encouraged again. The biggest thing is we are not turning the ball over. When we don't turn the ball over, we're tough to beat.

#### **Q. In the first half, you had a hundred yards rushing**

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**and passing. Wanted to get your thoughts of how satisfied you were with the balance of the offense overall today.**

GREG SCHIANO: I think we did a good job offensively. To be honest, I think we left a lot on the table. Now, I tip my hat to Wagner. They are a much-improved football team. They have some guys up front that I believe are FBS players.

We have to do a better job but you know what, we're getting better, so it's step-by-step.

**Q. When you talked about Reggie Sutton, when you told him, hey, this might not be the right move for you, how do you think he stayed so dedicated? And what was his -- how did this all happen?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think you've got to ask him that. I think he's had this steadfast vision of what he wanted to do, and he was not coming off it and more power to him. It's his body, you know.

I can tell when he's sore. You guys have got to understand that that operation was one of the most extensive knee operations I've ever been a part of as a coach, and that's 36 years. It was Ryan Neal-esque, maybe even worse, which those of you who have been around a while know how bad that one was. Yeah, it's a pretty special moment.

**Q. On a day like today where it was a come out and take care of business today, but it also gets you to 4-1 which is tied for the best start since 2014, and matching the win total of last year, what's the significance of being able to come out against an improved Wagner team and take care of business like you're supposed to?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, it's tough, you know, because we are coming off a tough, tough loss out at Michigan. And I told you guys, our guys truly believed that we were going out there to win, and they really were hurting after the loss, coaches and players, and I wanted to make sure that we didn't get beat twice by them because that's happened before. And we fought through it. It wasn't pretty but we fought through it during the week.

Then I thought the guys came out and like I said, I thought Wagner did a good job. I mean, exactly how I would, they shortened that game, they slowed that game down. Whenever the clock was running, you take the opportunities away from the team that has more people and better people, and they did it exactly how I'd do it.

So you knew it was going to be that, too. Tommy is an

excellent coach. He had a plan.

**Q. This is a bit off-topic, but how important was it for you to improve everything around the football experience when you got back here, just making the game more of an event for fans than it was perhaps your first time around?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, you know what first time around, we had so much ground to cover, like we didn't even have a logo. You remember we had like seven or eight logos. You watch a Rutgers video, you wouldn't even recognize what -- and now we have one hoe go. They see the "R" and they know what it is. We had so much baseline stuff to do the first time around.

But we also have more people, P.J. what he does for our game day is second-to-none, literally. I look at it this way, I have four kids, and my wife says, "It's got to be a family experience to go to a Rutgers game," and it is. It's a great experience between the boardwalk and the tailgate and the cheerleaders and the band; you can have a great day.

I was actually thinking about that today. I said, I wonder if people just come to the boardwalk and don't even go to the game, just take the kids to the boardwalk. My kids were little; I used to try to find anything when it was my -- you know, she had to do some stuff and I had -- oh, my goodness, how many times can you go to the Chuck E. Cheese, right? I think it's great, I do. I think our fans love it.

And it's really good for the players. You know, when they get off that bus and they do the scarlet walk, we started that tradition the first time and I think we've amped it up now with the stage and the music, I mean, that's really cool stuff.

And then I love our game day between the band and the cheerleaders and the music and the sirens, or the horn, right, and the lights, and the night games. I mean, I think it's a big-time environment; one that I think kids are excited to be a part of, so that's good, too.

**Q. As we said, Gavin playing into the third, what experience or confidence do you get from a game like this, looking forward to the Big Ten gauntlet coming up?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, he continues to take care of the football, so that's what we want to see. And he made some really good throws today, right and some -- he ate it once on the sack, which was the smart thing to do. I just thought he played a very measured game today and he hit some shots.

So I think he was, you know, what was he, 66 percent maybe, 67 percent, that's a good outing.

**Q. He didn't rush as much today but still had two rushing touchdowns, do you believe without any injuries, Gavin's rushing ability has opened up the offense a lot more?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, you certainly have to account for it. As I've told many of you over the years, when the quarterback runs the ball as a design play this changes the math because when the quarterback hands the ball off, now he's out of the equation. Well, now that he's a runner, it changes the defensive math. You have to have someone that accounts for him, and it's not always that easy to get that sometimes. Either somebody has to whoop somebody and make the play or you have to do things schematically.

Yeah, it does help for sure.

**Q. I don't know if it's too soon to tell with Reggie, but do you have an idea of how much he's going to play week-to-week? Is it going to be a week-to-week decision?**

GREG SCHIANO: I really believe it's week-to-week. He's a tough guy. But I'm sure he's going to be sore. You know, it's one thing in practice; it's another thing to play in a game. But we'll just play it by ear.

**Q. Sam Brown getting those carries, especially going into Big Ten play, how important was that to get that from today and have him emerge, just a little more of a workload?**

GREG SCHIANO: That was great. That was one of the things, the takeaways, for all four running backs to score touchdowns today.

And Sam has worked his way back. You know, you're a natural player, right, so you're a good player but like all the things, if you don't practice because you're injured, they can have a bad effect on your game day, ball security, things that people don't think about until a guy fumbles it, and they say, well, how could he fumble? Well, he hasn't practiced. I mean, all those things, pass protection, right. If you haven't practiced for a while, it's not that easy to stop some of those rushers.

So Sam has been practicing more and more every week. Aaron has been practicing more and more every week. So they are all starting to get well, and that's important going into this stretch because, as you know, it's a very physical

stretch we're going to face here.

**Q. The new guys on the injury report, Moses Walker, Bo Mascoe and Simon, anything long term or worries with those guys? What's their status?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, it's not an injury report. It's an availability report. So don't always attribute it to injury.

Evan had tweaked something a little bit late in the week and he could have played, but we saw it as an opportunity there to get Johnny in, and Evan to move on to next week and be ready to go.

Then there's some other things that are not always injury related. Moses was injury related. I think he's going to be fine.

Bo was not injury related. He's got a little something going on NCAA-wise that we're trying to work through, so we're continuing to work.

And I'll save you the question on Brantley. You know, he was listed as out because that has not been resolved.

**Q. Back when he had 13 straight touch backs to start the year and he's been -- how much -- he's kicking it short strategically or his leg is, whatever -- what's -- obviously that led to the return you mentioned earlier; the change in kicking between touchbacks and short kicks?**

GREG SCHIANO: We really haven't changed. There was a little wind out there. You know, it was 8-mile-per-hour, but it gusted up to like 14. I think on one of them he caught a gust and again, we tried a play that he executed every day this week perfectly, and then like a golfer would do, he picked up his head and the ball didn't go ten yards. And it was there, we would have recovered it, and it would have been a good on-side and we didn't and I think that bothered him. I know it bothered him and it affected his kicking for a little bit.

I told him, "Will you forget that? That's stealing from right now. Don't let that happen." I think he got the point because he banged a few after that and we were back to where we need to be. Yeah, because that's a weapon. When you bang those touchbacks, that's a big weapon, so hopefully we can do that consistently.

But again, we play in the Big Ten. And you're going to be kicking into the wind sometimes, and you'd better be able to cover and you'd better be able to fit the coverage and we didn't that time. We had a couple errors actually. I haven't even watched the tape but you can see it in person. We

failed on three different areas that we've got to get cleaned up.

But look, at the end of the day we did what we were supposed to do. Hopefully we got out of it injury-free. I'll know more tomorrow and I'm proud of our guys and now it's back to the Big Ten and it's, what is it, five, so we've got seven straight Big Ten games. So we'll start with the Wisconsin season starting tomorrow morning. Thank you, guys.

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