

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for showing up, guys, appreciate it. Big game coming up this week out in Wisconsin. Before we get to that I want to have a shout-out to my guy, Pop. What a great game he played last night, really cool for him. Isiah Pacheco, coming home to the great state of New Jersey and really showing out and being a big part of that win. I was really proud of him and I know everyone in our program was happy and excited for him.

With that, I'll open up for questions about Wisconsin.

Q. When you look at what Wisconsin's offense is doing under Phil Longo this season, I guess what stands out to you on film and how productive they have been? What stands out to you on till many and how productive they have been?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, they do a great job. Phil does a great job. Their offense is hard to stop. Multidimensional, people get, when they hear about tempo and they hear about air raid, they think it's just throw it all over the lot. They do a great job running the football. They have several different schemes that they run the football with, so it's going to be a huge challenge for all those reasons, and the biggest reason is good players.

Q. Evan only has one interception in six throws across five games. You touched on that being a big improvement in him not turning the ball over, how much of that is him in his personal growth and development, and how much is it Coach Ciarrocca working with him?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it's all one and the same. Other than the play calls what Kirk does as a coach and what Gavin does as a player, that's how they mesh together and that's why this works so well right now. It's a continual effort; you're as good as your last outing. So we've just got to keep working at it and he'll keep getting better. You know, Kirk calls the game and he calls it the way he sees fit.

Q. Do you feel coming into this season, I know Rutgers wanted to be very balanced offensively. Do you feel like you guys have been effective in creating that balance?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I don't know if balance is always the key. It's whatever it takes to win the game. So if they are giving you the throws, then we'll throw for a lot of yards and devalue the running game. But if you can run it, then you want to run it, right.

I always think it has a lot to do -- you have a game plan but then you have to go with what the opponent is giving you. So it's nice when it turns out like that but you can't really predict it because they have a big say in it.

Q. Just to go off what you said on Wisconsin's offense, on the defensive side of the ball, what stands out to you about what the Badgers do in that respect?

GREG SCHIANO: I should build on the offense more, because I didn't talk about the players. I just said the players.

I mean, you look at Mordecai, I think I said that right, he's a really fine player. He can throw it. He can run. Does a great job reading. Their back, Allen, is special, special. He's big, 6-2, 245. He is a load. And it's not one of those guys that can't move and doesn't have the ability to cut. He's special.

They have got a big veteran O-Line which helps a lot. Their tight ends are good players that utilize the tight ends. Rucci is one of them. I actually coached his dad at Penn State, so you know, athletic family there.

And then the series, there's five or six guys, they roll them in there and they are all dangerous. They can all hurt you. Coach Longo does a great job and he's got a lot of great weapons there to utilize.

Defensively, I think their front seven is really strong. They play with great technique, they play with great effort. Their hands, very heavy-handed front. Their linebacker, they have actually three or four of them that are really fine players. We've seen some of them in the past but good

players. Really up front seven is going to be tough, very tough physically, and they are really good at hitting their fits.

In the secondary, they go after the football. They are very aggressive. And then in special teams, they are really good. They utilize -- they have good personnel, big personnel, that can run, and they utilize them on their team. So it's going to be a challenge in every area.

And you know, I know Coach Fickell well, he's an excellent coach. We worked together for a year. One of the best coaches I've been around, literally, from an X & O standpoint, from a motivation standpoint, just everything and a great man, great family. He really does an awesome job. He did it at Cincinnati. He'll do it there. Really, like I said, one of the best I've been around.

Q. In the first five games of the season, what's something you think Rutgers can improve on as a whole during the next seven games and obviously the all-out Big Ten schedule?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm just focused on one game and that's Wisconsin and we have a lot of things to get better at for the Wisconsin game. You name it; we have to get better at it.

But we've got to get up front on offense and defense, we've got to be more precise. Continue to play with effort. In the secondary, in the skilled areas, just tighten it up a little bit, tighten the coverage up a little bit, tighten the techniques up a little bit. The receiving core, some of the routes, some of the depths, some of the techniques we're using, we have to tighten up. There's a lot to get better at right now. But the good thing is, we get to practice this week and to me, practice is everything.

Q. In the off-season the NCAA implemented a new rule for first downs where the clocks keep running, and a lot of coaches have been complaining about it on TV and social media. What are your thoughts?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm good. They make the rules, we play it. You can see that it's shortening the game a little bit, and I understand why. I mean, you can't talk out of both ends of your mouth. We all want all this money to come in, right. Well, TV is what provides that money. And they like to have those games in a nice, neat little time frame.

Hey, it's pretty good.

Q. You guys are playing a road game against one of the iconic brands in the Big Ten, maybe still the favorite to win the Big Ten West. Do you view this as

an opportunity for a signature win, a win that fans can hang their hats on and say, Rutgers got a big win at Wisconsin?

GREG SCHIANO: It's a big game. I'd be very, very careful in looking at that and saying, this is an iconic brand or this is a big win or whatever you want to call it.

We have one goal: That's to be 1-0 at the end of this Wisconsin season. It's hard. We have got a lot of work to do. We're in the middle of it right now putting it together. We as a staff and as a whole organization and as a team, we have a lot of work to do between now and Saturday.

They are very good, so we are going to do everything we can to go out there and like I said be 1-0 when we leave that stadium. They are good. Really good.

Q. Going back to something you were saying the other day about how this team is learning to do things that winning teams do that maybe a lot of people don't see. When did you kind of -- and it might be tough to pinpoint, when did you start to see the progression that the team is starting to understand what it takes to win on a consistent level?

GREG SCHIANO: Winning, you know what does that mean. It means that leaders take care of things that happen. A guy's late to something; it's not acceptable anymore. As a matter of fact, it really stands out if you're late, if you don't do what you're supposed to do when you're supposed to do it. When the leadership takes that over, and they handle that, that's when things start to go differently.

And because, you know, it's the same old deal, right. How you do anything is how you do everything. And if you can't be on time for something, then how do we know you're going to stay in the B gap, you know. And it's trust, doing what you're supposed to do when you're supposed to do it. It's hard, really hard.

Q. After the game you talked about Sheppard. What did you see of him in high school? He wasn't highly recruited. What do you think of his performance on Saturday with the few snaps he got?

GREG SCHIANO: In high school, I saw a great competitor that was a winner. He's really changed his body. If you saw him in high school, he looked more like a middle linebacker than he did a quarterback but he played quarterback like a middle linebacker, which is something I loved.

But you talk about reshaping his body; he has a great feel



for the game. He's a football player. Very instinctual. Yeah, so we're thrilled to get the chance to keep developing him.

Q. You talked about Gavin's development as a quarterback, curious to get your thoughts on, do you feel like you're seeing him get a much better rhythm, chemistry, whatever word you want to use, with his receivers as the season has gone on?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think, you know, with JaQuae being out for part of camp, for most of camp, they are just kind of hitting their stride together. I think Isaiah and Christian have been practicing the whole time, so I think they have a groove going. But you know, you can't throw enough to your receivers. And you can't throw enough routes to get -- you can only get more comfortable with the timing and rhythm.

Time, practice, those guys stay out after and throw on their own. You know, if you have a burning desire to do it, you'll get better and those guys do.

Q. Ray, look like he limped off in the fourth quarter, do you have anything on how he's doing?

GREG SCHIANO: He'll probably be okay but that will all go to the availability report. We'll just kind of stick with that so we don't get too variable.

Q. You touched on Bo Mascoe having an NCAA deal. Is there anything else you can share detail-wise on that?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, you know, with the NCAA, I really try to -- believe me, I'd love to say a lot. But I really try to keep my mouth shut because it only -- it can only hurt them and I don't want to do that. My own personal frustrations, I have to have some self-control and not let that out.

But yeah, hopefully that -- I would love for those to get resolved, both of them. But that's not been kind of the flow or the vibe this year. Those things haven't been worked out very much.

One of the good things that I'd like to talk about when it comes to off-the-field stuff is Mayan Ahanotu. Mayan is named a semifinalist for the Campbell Trophy, which is really probably the ultimate award in college football, right. It's a high-level football player who is an excellent student, so what an honor that is for him. I've known him since he was a teenager, hanging out in my house with my sons and coaching him when I was coaching high school football down in Tampa.

Couldn't be more thrilled, a guy who has taken -- came here, transferred in, and has just become the ultimate leader of our team. You know, he's become a really, really solid young man, and this is a warranted chance that he's getting here as a semifinalist and it's a great award, so we're thrilled for that.

We are getting into it now, the tests. The kids all have tests this week and they have all been in school for over a movement this is where the student athlete part really gets highlighted. And what does that mean? That means guys are up late writing papers and getting ready for tests and that kind of stuff. It's a challenge right now.

We are looking forward on getting on that plane and going out to Wisconsin. Like I said, the goal is to be 1-0 when we get back on the plane but we've got to go do it.

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