

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Postgame Press Conference

Rutgers 27, Michigan State 24

GREG SCHIANO: For those that stuck in the round they got to see something exciting, that was really, really good. Really proud of our players.

It was definitely, as we say, a 60-minute chop. Everything that could go wrong in the first three quarters pretty much did. And they kept going. It's a great lesson for them in life. It's a football game but as I've always said, I think this is one of the great teachers for young people, this game.

So I'll open it up.

Q. Special teams early this season has struggled in the fourth quarter had some big plays. Can you talk about the resilience and how big those plays were in winning the game?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, huge plays. We do some things that are a little bit different in our punt block and in our punt team.

So we don't always know what we're going to get, so what we see and what we prepare for, sometimes they change. They change their protection. They did some things that they have not shown.

But our kids look at that as a play that's a viable play and they made a big one on that and then the sky kick was a tremendous play by Thomas Amankwaa and a great kick by Jude, to place it where he did.

Razor -- razor thin. The margin for error was razor thin. Really proud of those guys.

Q. Tyreem Powell getting the second quarter, how did that affect you guys, having to lose him for the entire second half?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, that's a huge loss. I mean, Tyreem is one of our elite players. You know I can't comment on the call; I'm confused but what are you going



to do. I'll do the process. I always do it every week. Send the plays in. It's hard. Officiating is not easy.

But when it goes to review that's where it gets a little bit -- then it's not so hard, so I'm a little confused. But that's life.

Again those are all the things that our players had to keep fighting through. When you're trying to do something and you feel that maybe something was unjust, that can play in your mind. And you can't let it. You just have to scope chopping and see if the worm will turn. I know one thing, if you don't, if you lay that X down, you don't have any chance. Doesn't guarantee you if you keep going that you're going to successfully end the day but gives you a chance.

Q. The way Kyle ran the ball, especially in the fourth quarter what has he meant to the team this year, especially with Sam and Aaron getting built back up?

GREG SCHIANO: I think Kyle is a great example when I talk to you guys about we are a developmental program. Kyle came in here and each year he's gotten better and now he's a grown man. He's a mature, 21-year-old, 22-year-old guy that when you sit down, you have a man-to-man conversation, goes back to the team and he's a captain and he communicates things.

Then when you play the way he plays with the conviction that he plays the game with, people want to follow you.

Q. How exciting is it to celebrate a big comeback win like that with your team?

GREG SCHIANO: It's great. You know, people do a lot of things in life, and they are quite successful. But unless you're in that locker room, you never really know what that feeling is like. You'd like to be able to bottle it but you can't. It's for a short period of time.

But man, it's fun and as much work as you do together, and as much practice -- you guys know, I say it all the time, practice is everything. I believe that. As much work as we put in in practice and off-season training and all that stuff, to be able to have a day like today where you just kept going at it and kept chopping and it turns your way, that's a



special feeling.

Q. You keep speaking about chopping and continuing to go through. What was said possibly to Wimsatt after the early two first half interceptions and he delivers the ball to give you guys the lead. What was said to keep his composure throughout the game?

GREG SCHIANO: You know, Gavin has really grown up quite a bit. There wasn't much that needed to be said. He was frustrated. He certainly didn't want to sail it over the head, right, when that happened.

But the thing that I've seen about him is how quickly he can put it behind him and chop the next moment and that's what we talk about all the time is each moment is its own moment. If you live in the past that, can steal from you, and if you live in the future that, can steal from you. I thought he did a very good job of chopping the moment and really proud of him. He's making progress.

Q. Just clarification point. Was the kickoff an intentional on side kick, good break, both?

GREG SCHIANO: No. It's an intentional sky kick. The on-sides is boom, boom. The sky is you kick it for a spot down around the numbers area.

So yeah, that was very intentional. Something we practice all the time and Jude hit it exactly where he wanted to hit it.

Q. The recovery -- if the returner is not ready?

GREG SCHIANO: If it's a normal kickoff team, usually there's a tight end there so he fair catches it or catches it and runs, right.

But they were out with their hands team because they thought we were probably going to on-side and then we had one returner deep. He almost got it; he was close. But I thought Thomas did a great job of -- quite honestly, I wasn't watching him per se, I was watching the kick. And then all of a sudden a blur shows up in the moment, and I thought great focus and concentration to catch that ball.

Q. At the end of the game, looked like you got emotional on the sidelines in that moment victory. Curious what this meant for you. It's been a long journey to get to a point where you're competitive and winning games like this.

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know if I was emotional. There was so much hard math. It was right on the cusp. That's why I went bananas when the clock got mixed up. We were right on the edge, but I knew we had it if we did what

we did, and then all of a sudden the clock changed.

And so I was -- that went from, okay, now, we got it, which should have been right from the beginning, right. It's out there, you have to make sure you do that clock exactly right.

After the game, it was probably as much relief but I was really happy for our players. These kids work so hard. For them to have it pay off, because they have certainly had their tough times. That was a really good day for them today.

Q. You always talk about family, chop. But can you talk about the offensive line coming off the blocks, coming up the second level and so forth and so on, can you talk about that? Because they don't get enough talk.

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we are getting better on the offensive line. I thought it was a special moment. Reggie started today. He's going to be super sore. But you talk about a warrior, and it's hard for me to tell you how well they did this or they did that because you know, I have the worst seat in the house. It just seems like a mush there.

But you know when a back has opportunities like Kyle did, that people blocked well. Make no mistake about it. Michigan State's defense is really a good defense. They are second in the country in third down. They have got some really big defensive linemen, which for us can be an issue. They are really big and strong. So I was pleased.

Q. Christian Dremel finishing with six catches for 80 yards. What did you make of his performance and how that helped out the passing game?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, Dremel has been steady all year and at times, spectacular. He's as tough as they come. The other day he had an oversized sweatshirt on and some loose pants, and you would have said the guy was, you know, the guy who serves the coffee at Starbucks. You wouldn't say he was a Big Ten slot receiver who is really doing well, and we were joking with him.

But he is a fighter. He is a warrior, and he's a lot faster than people think, too, which helps him, really helps him. But the biggest thing that helps him is he chops like nobody else. He is special.

Q. What went into the decision to start him?

GREG SCHIANO: He was playing the best. Yeah, everything around here is competition. Whoever gives us, who we feel gives us the best chance to win; am I right

every time? No. Is our staff right every time? Certainly not, right.

But you have to play the guys that you think at this time, today, gave you the best chance to win. Can that change? Sure. It does. You've seen the rotation. We've mixed a lot of guys. That's why I think competition, I'm a big believer that competition, the cream rises the top with competition. That will continue.

Q. What was that feeling in the fourth quarter? Could you feel the momentum start to shift?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, you really could. And oftentimes, as a coach you're so worried about your team. Sometimes you've just got to take a breath and say, well, you know what how do they feel right now. It's slipping away from them, right.

So you have to play all that into what your decisions are. I thought our guys did a very good job. Certainly the punt block touchdown gave everybody a little juice but you still had to have stops and run drives. There's a lot of football in that fourth quarter to get it done, especially that last drive. I think what was it, what did it start with, 7:30 maybe?

In my own mind I'm thinking we could use one of those old-fashioned Jerry Rice drives right now. We had a lot of them. Just bleed the clock out, and then walk out with them a knee, and that's just what we did, so that was gratifying.

Q. First of all, you would know more than anybody else, rain does funny things to a game.

GREG SCHIANO: Excuse me?

Q. Rain does funny things to a game.

GREG SCHIANO: Yes.

Q. When the momentum changed, you could sense from particularly the defense, those guys were fired up. Were you ahead of the game or were you just letting it flow as the game went on?

GREG SCHIANO: I think as a coach, you always have to be ahead of the game. Some people think you can make the game go the way you want. I've said to you many times, unfortunately, after losses, that games take on a life of their own.

Well, this game took on a life of its own and many time it was in our favor and that happens. Momentum, anybody

who doesn't think momentum is real, you know, they are kind of living in a dream world. Because you watch that one today, right, we're having trouble stopping them and all of the sudden they can't gain an inch. How does that happen? There has to be some force. I have my beliefs but I was really happy for our guys.

Q. What did you learn about this team from the first three quarters and just how they were able to put it together in the fourth quarter? You probably already knew about them but what did you actually see come out today?

GREG SCHIANO: You think you know. Do you ever really know until they do it? No. You think you do. And that's why last week I stood at the podium and said, yet. We weren't ready to win a game like that, yet.

I really would not like to stand here today and have to be saying it again. So I'm ultra pleased that we found a way to win that game.

What I think it does, though, is any time you work really hard at something and you believe really, really strongly in something and then it works, it builds confidence in the process and it builds confidence in yourself. So I think, you know, we have a mix on our team of some older players and some really young players, and I think this is a great, great lesson for everybody, including me.

Q. Big picture question. What does this win mean for the program as a whole, 5-2, your further year, five games left, close to a Bowl, things like that.

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, you know, I know everybody thinks, here he goes with his coach speak, right. But I'm not kidding you. Somebody saw me today who has not seen me who hasn't a while and said, "Boy, you look like crap." My eyes were puffy and I haven't slept enough, and I can't wait to go to bed tonight.

But you put so much into every week that I don't think I can do it any other way than 1-0 or 0-1 at the end of that season. Then you have a fresh season. If you win, you've got to get back to work, right and get out of your own, if you won, and if you lose, you have to get out of your feelings and go back to work because we've got to go win the next one.

That's the way I'm going to keep it. That's the way our team is going to keep it. No one is naïve. Everybody knows what's at stake, right. So it's not lost on anybody.

But to me, I'm not wired that way and I try to make our program follow that same kind of train of thought is that

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

each week is its own season and that's why I literally celebrate when we win and I mourn it when we lose because you put so much into it.

Q. The celebration after you felt the relief of the game ending and you see your team celebrate on the field jumping around, this might be hard to quantify, but where does this rank among the wins, the moments you've had at Rutgers, has to be up there for you?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we've had a lot of great moments, right. There's been some really great moments and there's been some really tough moments.

This one was certainly, in what we are trying to build, I think it was a critical -- it backed it up for the players. They work so hard and then it affirmed what they are doing.

It's one game. It's over now, right. We're 1-0. We'll enjoy it tonight and then get back to work and start on the Indiana season tomorrow.

But yeah, it's good. It's really good for our guys to have this, and appreciate you guys sticking around, too, all right. Thanks.

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