

Rutgers University Football

Media Conference

Monday, October 30, 2023

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: All right, fellas, good to see you. Back after a week off. How can I help you?

Q. Obviously you went up against Marvin Harrison, Jr. before but when you look at him on film this year, are there any areas where you feel he took his game to another level or anything he's doing better than in the past?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, Marvin Harrison, Jr. is arguably one of the best players in the country. He's continued to improve. You can see he's a real professional the way he's prepared, and again when you're going against players of that skill, they are very dangerous.

Q. The two McCords, I'll start with Kyle. What have you seen of him on tape? I know he committed to Ohio State before you even got here but he was a '21 class guy. Did you talk to him during the recruiting processor was he already all Buckeyes?

GREG SCHIANO: No, we talked a little bit and I talked to his dad. But you're right, he was committed and he was all set with Ohio State.

Q. What do you think of how he's done so far?

GREG SCHIANO: He's a really good quarterback. You can see, I've been able to watch them on TV, so a little TV scouting. He's a fiery leader, and you can see his teammates believe in him. He's a young quarterback who is getting better every week.

So again, part of the challenge of playing a team that has so many skilled people.

Q. His dad, I believe he was a freshman here during your year as a GA?

GREG SCHIANO: I think he might have been a sophomore. But yes, I knew his dad. You know, I was a GA and I was the box lunch coordinator, so I probably got his dad a sandwich here and there.

Q. Have you guys stayed in touch over the years or built a relationship?

GREG SCHIANO: I wouldn't say stayed in touch but I've run across him at times. He was always a good, fun guy to be around. Fun guy to coach. I didn't really coach him very much. I ran the scout team and he had already moved past that but yeah, he's a good man.

Q. Coming out of the bye week, you have a young quarterback in Gavin Wimsatt. You've talked about the progress throughout the season. Do you feel the bye has been in helping along his development?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we had a couple good practices last week and Gavin got some real good reps. So you know, at the stage of his development, reps are critical; and the more you get, the better off you'll be.

Q. You'll have a pretty interesting scenario with Desmond Igbinosun playing against his brother, Davison. Curious, have you coached brothers playing against each other in your career? And then also, if you could share anything about recruiting Davison, I guess twice, and that whole dynamic of the family.

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I don't know if I recruited or coached brothers that have played against each other. I may have. I've been coaching a long time. Doesn't jump out at me though.

You know, it's two teams playing each other. It's not two brothers playing each other. Although, I asked Des, "Does your mom have one of those split jerseys, half-Rutgers, half-Ohio State?"

We did recruit Davison coming out of high school, and that didn't work out. He went to Ole Miss.

The second time I talked to him, but he was looking to go to a National Championship contender and he didn't feel we were that, so I understood that we weren't what he was looking for. Yeah, that's about it.

Q. With the bye week in the rearview window, has



anyone emerged on the defensive end with the loss of Tyreem Powell?

GREG SCHIANO: We had a three-way rotation going there with Mo and Deion and Tyreem. Now Tyreem is no longer in the rotation. So it will be probably more of a two-man rotation.

But we have young linebackers behind that are preparing, getting better. Just you play with what you have.

Q. Late last year when you guys faced Ohio State, there was a fake punt and some things got a little bit heated. What was the players' reaction after that, and do you think they come into this game with a little bit of a chip on their shoulder?

GREG SCHIANO: No. I think that's in the distant past. It had nothing to do with the fake punt, nothing at all. It was to do with protecting our player that was on their sideline that was surrounded and getting pushed around.

That fake punt wasn't called. It was our fault. We didn't put an edge to the punt block, and the kid is taught to roll, and if it's there, you take it. So there's no blame there. It was truly protecting our player, that was it. But that's -- feels like years ago.

Q. Do the Igbinosuns have the split jersey?

GREG SCHIANO: Excuse me?

Q. The Igbinosuns, you mentioned you asked Desmond if they had the split jersey.

GREG SCHIANO: No, I didn't really seen stick around to hear the answer. I was just joking with him.

Q. Reggie Sutton, Kirk called him a stabilizing force for the offensive line last week, he was an inspirational story, and now he is now becoming a fixture to the offensive line. How important has he been to solidifying that line, and what have you even from him playing in his last couple games?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I mean, is he the player that he was before he got hurt? No. Will he ever be? No. But he certainly is a stabilizing force like Kirk said.

He's a mature guy. He's a experienced guy. Literally a coach on the field. And what we are trying to do is treat him like the vet that he is and make sure that we get him to Saturday where he feels -- he's never going to feel great, but he feels good enough to go out there and compete, and so far we've been able do that.

This past week was great for him. He did very little, if anything. We'll get him going again this week, and see if we can't, you know, one game at a time, see if we can't get him out there and have him be an effective player.

But he's great. So happy for him. He's such a great young man and a guy who works his tail off. Many times I asked him, "Are you sure you want to keep doing this?" I literally suggested he hang it up. But he was steadfast in his desire to want to do it.

So when somebody does something for so long and then eventually gets the result they are trying to get, it makes me happy.

Q. What have you continued to see from JaQuae Jackson week-in and week-out as he's continues to kind of be a consistent playmaker for the offense and a really reliable target for Gavin?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, JaQuae is where I wish we would have had him now, I wish we'd had him at the beginning of the year. He missed training camp, wasn't with us in the spring. Really didn't get here until late June.

So I only wish we could have had him earlier because he is starting to hit a stride of sorts and getting better each week. Again, it comes back to the question about repetitions. Football is truly a game of repetition, and you can't -- there's no substitute for those.

Q. In the big picture, how do you close the gap on a national title-contending team like Ohio State, and do you think you guys are getting close to doing that?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I do very little big picture when it comes to that stuff. We're trying to be 1-0 at the end of the Ohio State season. We have to have a great week of preparation to do that, and then we have to go play our best game and see where that stacks up against theirs.

And I can't control anything about them but I certainly can us. And that's going to be my focus; that we have a great, consistent week of practice, and then go play our best game of the season.

Q. Just to follow up on Ohio State, on the defensive side of the ball, is there anything in particular that stands out to you about them?

GREG SCHIANO: They have got a lot of good players. You're looking at a front that is probably all NFL players. Their front seven will be all NFL players. But the good thing is, the back four or five are all NFL players as well.

So you're looking at a defense that is probably -- I mean, I don't want to be exaggerating. I think every single guy there will be an NFL player, which -- including some especially depth players, which it is what it is. That's why they are one of the top defenses in the country. We'll have our hands full for sure.

Q. In the last four games of the season, what do you really want your team to improve on in your last four games?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm not really concerned about the last four. I'm worried about one, and that's the Ohio State game and what I said. What I want to see is a consistent great week of practice and then go out and play our best game of the year.

Q. You've probably been asked this a lot, you guys break the Bowl streak, does this feel anything at all to you like 2005, 2004, those critical years of the first time around?

GREG SCHIANO: The similarity is we are building a program. I keep talking about the pipeline and just like then, the pipeline wasn't full yet. We're getting closer.

I think this 2004 (2024) class, once we get them here, will fill the pipeline. So then when you ask me questions about depth, we'll have more experienced depth and when you ask me about our front line players, they will have cumulative representations. We have that in some areas, but not all yet. That's part of building a program the way we do it.

We don't get ready-mades like the team we are playing this week. They get some guys that come in that are five-star guys. We don't get a lot of those but that's okay. We know who we are. That's the key to being us at Rutgers is we develop guys, they believe in what we're doing, they believe in the development, and we're getting close to having the pipeline full and that's where things get fun when that pipeline gets full. So we are getting close.

Again, guys, appreciate it. I thought our guys did an excellent job in the bye week. We are dead in the middle to the back half of the semester. Academically, Rutgers is such a challenging school academically, I think our guys made the most of it that way as well, not only in our preparation as a football game program but academically meeting those challenges.

Jeff Jones, who is director of player development, he and his staff do such a great job of motivating and inspiring our guys to do what they are capable of academically. So that was a huge, huge thing, too, during the off-week. I would

be remiss if I didn't comment on that. I think our guys are busting their hump academically, as well as building something special here athletically.

Appreciate you guys covering us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...