

# Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference



Rutgers - 49, Akron - 17

GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for coming out and covering the team. Appreciate you doing that. I was really proud of our guys. I thought they chopped through the -- our big thing was we've got to chop the moment. We can't let anything that happens in the past or any concern about the future get in the way, and I thought we did that.

I was really -- going into the game, I was really -- I thought they did a great job defensively: Their scheme, their guys, their players. It took a little while to get it going, but our guys, that's what chopping is. Just keep doing it, and it will work, and I was pleased as a team we did that because it wasn't anything easy. Everything was earned.

Hat's off to Akron. It's good to be 1-0 in the season. I'll open it up.

**Q. Second start for Athan. How do you think he fared? And how do you think he fared in the passing game as well?**

GREG SCHIANO: He did well. I thought he got hit on the interception and it kind of affected the throw.

I thought our receivers did a good job. I thought they ran better routes this week than a week ago. They fought for the ball better with better extension, so it's a work in progress for sure.

We have some good, really good young receivers, and then we have some older guys as well. So I like the mix.

**Q. Chris Long had that great touchdown catch. He's had an interesting story here, right? Battling back from some injuries. What made him stand out this summer to get him back kind of in the starting role and get things going again?**

GREG SCHIANO: You're right. Chris has had a bumpy road for sure. We've had a lot of serious, good talks over the years.

But he just made a decision that he was going to -- it can be discouraging when all those things keep happening to you. He just made up his mind that he was going to come back and give it everything he had with no regrets and see where the chips fall. Happy for him he's having success.

**Q. 200-yard day for Kyle. I'm probably running out of adjectives at this point. Does anything surprise you at this point anymore?**

GREG SCHIANO: No. He's a really patient runner, has great vision, and then when he decides to go, he's violent. I mean, he going to go.

I thought our offensive line, they're just getting better and better every week. They're working at it in practice. Our pad level is getting better and better every week. When you get tired, your pad level starts to come up. So it's part conditioning, it's part technique.

It's a good mix, that line. They take care of him. That's their guy. It's good stuff.

**Q. Between Chris Long's long touchdown, a couple of deep passes to Kymere Miller, were you encouraged with your offense's ability to stretch the field today and what they put on tape?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah. Like I told you, last week we had a couple called. Sometimes the coverage is such that you're not going to do it. You're not going to force it. Today we got some looks that were more favorable. I think the long one to Chris, that ball was in the air maybe 45 yards. That was a jet.

I call it flyover yards. You fly over a lot of problems when you make those kinds of plays. You don't get holding penalties. You don't get illegal procedures. You don't get TFLs. You just go flying over. When you can do that, it's helpful for sure.

**Q. Finley only threw for 138 yards today. What do you think was working for the defense against the air game?**



GREG SCHIANO: I thought the D-line supplied pressure, which is always the most important thing, right? If you can put pressure on the quarterback. We didn't always structurally do it correctly and he got out a couple times, but.

I thought the coverage was good too. I thought Robert Longerbeam really covered well. I thought our safeties did a good job. We had a bust there, one bust we got to make sure we fix.

Overall, I thought the defense, again, played well. We can play better on defense, and we will.

**Q. Once upon a time, Rutgers had a Heisman campaign for a running back. Are we at the point we should start talking about Kyle Monangai in the conversation about the best players in college football?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think you just did. I don't know about all that. I'm not really into that, and Kyle isn't into that.

But you're right. If he continues to play at a level like he is, then I think that stuff takes care of itself really. I know this. Winning games is a huge contributing factor to that as well. So as a team, we need to continue to improve and win games.

**Q. At halftime they come out, opening drive, they score a touchdown. However, you guys answer with a touchdown of your own, six plays, 75 yards, six-minute drive. What does that say essentially about the resiliency of this team and what type of confidence does that build in your offense?**

GREG SCHIANO: I thought that was really big in that game because it turns into an 11-point game, so it's a two-score game. Like you said, we answered the bell. That was an important answer of the bell.

Again, I've always told our team games take on a life of their own. You look at it and say, how did that get out of control like that? That was huge to go score. That drive was, I think, the most important part of the game.

**Q. Hey, Greg, just going back to Kyle for a second, when you have a back that can not only get you the tough yards but get you to the big chunk yards when those opportunities arise, how important is it for an offense to have a back who can do that?**

GREG SCHIANO: Again, explosive plays are important. Like I said, if you have to have a 16-play drive to score, you almost have to be perfect, and none of us are perfect.

When you get those chunk plays, whether it's flyover yards or big guys like Kyle at times, it's critically important to your overall success as an offense.

**Q. Obviously a little unique to have a bye week after two games, but is it coming at a fortuitous time given how banged up you were coming out of camp and guys are still dealing with ailments here and there?**

GREG SCHIANO: It is. And we may have one or two more today. We'll continue to work it.

The way we operate is that's part of football. We know that. We have a great medical staff here, I think the best in America. They tell me this is the best case, this is the worst case, and usually it falls somewhere in between there. We don't lament over we don't have this guy, we have that guy, you've just got to go, got to move forward.

I thought Antwan Raymond stepped up. We don't have Sam. Antwan steps up now and really, really did a good job. I think that's the mentality you have to have. You fill that pipeline with players, and those guys have got to be chomping at the bit for their chance, their opportunity.

**Q. Malcolm Ray, I know he had that big sack, but also just his willingness to stick on multiple blockers as well led to a pass rush. Can you speak to that today?**

GREG SCHIANO: Malcolm's worked really, really hard since he got here. He's changed his body. He's really gotten to become a finely conditioned defensive lineman. I know he was disappointed coming off his performance last week, and we talked a lot about just chop your job and the plays will come to you.

I think that's what he did today. There's a saying we have, see a little, see a lot. As a D-lineman, the O-linemen tell you everything. You don't need to see a whole bunch. And if you just have the discipline to react to what he does, all of a sudden plays just come to you.

I think that's what happened with him today. Quite honestly, I can't see anything in there. I didn't even know he had the sack because I'm usually looking at the secondary to see if we got them covered or not.

I heard, the guys told me in the locker room that he had a sack, which is great.

**Q. KJ Duff gets his first career touchdown. What does it do for a young player -- I believe you said a couple times he had a good preseason. But for him to have the touchdown, have the results, what does it do for a**

## **young player's confidence moving forward?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we were very fortuitous there, right? Wow, that ball bounces right off their guy. I didn't really see it. They told me that. I didn't see the play.

KJ is a big, big target, and he's got really good hands. It's he, Coach Brock, and Coach Perry, as they keep getting him better and better fundamentally, he's got the -- he and Ian Strong are going to be two really good receivers going forward. It's going to take a lot of work, but it will happen.

## **Q. Did Sam Brown re-aggravate the injury from last season? Are you concerned about him moving forward?**

GREG SCHIANO: You never know with injuries, right? I'm not going to get into the injuries. That's what the availability report is for. We're just going to have to wait and see what the status is.

As I said, I was really proud of Antwan. He stepped up and performed very well.

## **Q. Going back to Anthony, he seemed to take more shots down the field today. Was that something by design, or did he just see it and take it?**

GREG SCHIANO: You got to see it. The play's got to be called. He wouldn't last long out there if he just started taking shots on his own.

Kirk, I thought, called a great game. You go over 500 yards on offense, that was good, but it's all about the players executing.

There was a couple times that we had opportunities that either we got hit the one time and it was an interception, and there was another time that we had a guy and didn't quite get it. I thought it was a little gray there. When Ian Strong was on that nine ball there, but it is what it is.

## **Q. Another good game for Antwan Raymond. You kind of touched on it before, but what can you say about the work he's done in the running back pecking order, especially in limited time as a late reclassification?**

GREG SCHIANO: He's strong, as you can see. He's going to be a really good running back. He has that physicality that is Big Ten football. Like you don't just hit him and he goes down very much. He's usually falling forward, and that's a great trait to have as a running back. So I'm encouraged.

The most important thing is he's taking care of the football. As a young back sometimes, you start to worry about production and forget about the most important thing, the football. He's been good with the ball. You've got to just keep coaching the heck out of that, and he's got to keep valuing that ball more than any yard. So far, so good.

## **Q. In the Scarlet Walk, you had a little embrace with Eric. You had a few moments with him. Was there more emotion in this game for you? What was the emotion of having that and everything around this game today?**

GREG SCHIANO: I didn't get to see the pregame, the walk. I want to thank everybody. The guys told me there was like a thousand people following them down Scarlet Knight Way. All those people did that, raised money for the Believe Foundation. First, a big, huge thank you for everybody who did that. It was a great event.

Karen his mom, we've done a lot together, she was truly elated. This is the best one we've had. That made me feel good. You could tell Eric had his game face on, but you could tell he liked it too. But Eric's a football guy through and through. So I was really thrilled that had a good -- they had a great event.

Then to be able to win the game convincingly like we did, that's a really good start.

Again, guys, I appreciate you covering our team. Get a week off, and then we're back at it. Thanks.

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