

# Rutgers University Football

## Media Conference

Saturday, October 19, 2024

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference



UCLA 35, Rutgers 32

GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for coming out and covering us and sticking around. Certainly disappointing. Something that we have to get fixed. It's not the desired outcome in what we set out to do. It's my job as the head coach to make sure that I examine everything in the program and make sure we are doing things correctly.

I will not come up here and start to feel like the sky is falling down, I promise you. We did a lot of good things out there today. Just weren't good enough to win. Didn't play well enough to win, I should say.

But I'll answer your questions and try to help you understand it a little bit better.

#### **Q. Defensively, you had some injuries there, but what do you think was the main issue?**

GREG SCHIANO: You're right, we did have injuries, but everybody's got injuries. I'm not going to go -- I think more than the guys that didn't play, were the guys that played that are hurting. Guys that played that didn't practice very much because they couldn't. They couldn't practice and then be able to play. They had to heal.

Those guys, I think -- you know, again, that's what I've got to look at, is a healthy so-and-so better than an 80 percent other guy. I've got to make some decisions that way I think, especially on a short week. I have absolutely no idea what our medical situation is coming out of the game.

I think we have a lot of really tough kids, guys that play, and play with pain. We have a belief around here, and we talk about it all the time, there's a difference between pain and injury; and in this game of football, you play with pain. You don't play with injury. You play with injury, you can hurt yourself worse, and that I'm not trying to have anybody have. But you do play with pain and you practice with pain.

223 yards after the catch. That's the stat that just smacks me in the face, right. We didn't tackle well. Now, why is

that? Did we forget how to tackle? You know, Michigan and Rutgers were back-and-forth last year as the best tackling team in football; the stats that they do in tackling.

We didn't forget how. We didn't forget how to coach it. We didn't forget how to do it. It's mostly the same guys. But that's the hardest part of playing defensive football, and if you have never done it, then you don't understand and nor will you ever understand, and if you've done it, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You know, it looks easy. It's like a video game, just go take that guy out and he's down. That's not the way it is.

And when you tackle somebody and you're hurting, that amplifies the pain quite a bit. So we have to -- I have to, because I'm in charge of personnel, I have to make some decisions what we do with young players; what do we do with guys that are hurting. Do we give them a chance to just totally get back? You know, again, it's not like we have that many guys, right.

So that's what I'm going to have to do between now and heading out to California. Short week. Six days and we play at USC Friday night. I've got a lot to do. We'll keep this moving.

#### **Q. You scored a touchdown early in the third quarter to cut it to five points. Went for two there. Could you just tell us your thinking on why you would chase points that early in the game?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, "chase points" is good for commentators and also good for writers, and it's good for bars, to talk about it. Like you know, you're sitting around the bar and you're having a beer, and you say, Well, why would he do that?

I, every year look. We have analytics people who do it, and so this is computerized and you look at all the college football since they started doing two-point plays, and you run it out. And it's a very simple thing. You look at the computer. It says one, two. And I never go to the very edge of two. So I never want to be the outlier that is totally -- so I go in, shave a little off this and a little off that, and those are the situations we go for two.



Now, the hard thing is, everybody would like to be able to make it a video game again and say, Oh, go for two. How many possessions did we have in the first half? Three possessions. Usually you have five to six possessions. So we got cut in half the way the game -- I knew that was going to happen. They huddle every play, right. It's NFL football, and that's the way the game played. It played like an NFL football game.

And after three possessions, so when you go and you figure the possessions out, you know, chasing the points is such an overused nomicker (moniker) because it's easy to say, right, don't ever go for it before -- that's not true. If you did the analytical work, you'd know that's not true. That's not me. That's not somebody's feelings. That's math. And you've got to apply it to your team and you've got to apply it to your game that you're praying that day. After three possessions in the first half, I said, this is not going to be a very -- a lot of opportunities for us.

So yeah, I 100 percent would do it again, and it's not being defiant or defending. It's math. And if anybody would ever like to go through it with me, I'll show you. It's not complicated.

**Q. The injuries keep mounting. Today, Kenny and Victor being lost for the rest of the season. How concerning going forward is that the depth is getting hit harder and harder?**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, but I was really proud, right. I was really proud. I have no idea how Mike Higgins played but he jumped in there. And Logan Blake jumped in there. I watched one play, Logan Blake ran a split zone and walloped the kid. I said, Good for you, Logan.

Now, this is not exactly the timeline I had in mind for Logan but that's life, right. That's Big Ten Football. We were very fortunate a year ago with injuries. We're not so fortunate this year. Nobody cares. That's life in the big city. Figure it out. And that's what we'll go do. We'll go figure it out.

**Q. Having a lot of guys, this is a program that's prided itself on being a development program, are you concerned about drop-offs between starters and second-tier guys or second-string guys? And is there a significant drop off? And if there is, why do you think that is?**

GREG SCHIANO: Let me get your question. You asked about four different questions. Let's go one at a time. Am I concerned about the drop offs between ones and twos?

**Q. Correct.**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, at certain position, probably, yeah. Also concerned about the drop-off from ones to threes, right. But it doesn't matter. We are a development program. But who isn't a development program? Some have to do it more than others. We have to do it more than others. That's just the hand that we are dealt at this time. That's okay.

We have plenty of good players. We had guys who stepped in and played well today. We have other guys that -- when you don't have experience, experience counts for something. You'll be a better writer ten years than you are now. I'll be a better coach if I'm still coaching ten years from now.

All our experiences help us. So a young guy, can he make mistakes because he's just never been there? Yeah. But maybe an older guy that's hurting can't make the plays that he normally can make.

So we've got to -- I have to do -- I'm disappointed in myself. As that game unfolded, I sit there and say, I wonder if I did the right thing. But you've got to make a move. You've got to make a decision during the week, and you know, we did it. Wasn't good enough, though.

We certainly didn't play well enough. When you look at it, you score 32 points in a Big Ten football game, that should be good enough. It wasn't today but it should be, especially the way our program is built. We didn't get it done defensively, and we've got to look at it and figure it out.

**Q. The third quarter, there was the play, swing pass to Jones, the running back, and looked like none of your defenders went with him. Was that a blown coverage or were you able to diagnose that play wet?**

GREG SCHIANO: No. There was somebody who went with him but he went with him a little late, and he's really fast. So if you go with him a little late -- there was a lot of those, though, today. There was a lot of those where the ball was caught.

How do you have 223 yards of yardage after the catch? That means we didn't do a very good job, and it isn't just the DBs and it isn't just the linebackers. It's everybody. We didn't do a very good job in the pass rush where the quarterback had the opportunity to extend plays.

We just didn't play well defensively. That's why it was a 35-32 shootout.

And I was really proud of Athan. I thought he went out and made some really big time pros. You've got a true

freshman catching balls, two true freshmen out there, a sophomore, two sophomore -- I mean, there's a lot of good things cooking that I'm excited about. I just wish that we didn't have all those either issues.

But you know what, that's life. Some seasons you stay healthy and some you don't. We have to figure it out. We have a clock downstairs that we hit and it's six hours and four minutes an hour ago, or six days, I'm sorry, six days and four hours, an hour ago. So now it's six days and three hours. By the time I get home it will be in the five days. We've got to get ready to go play USC, a very good football team.

So yeah, I'm proud of our guys. I'm proud of our coaches. I'm proud of our players. They can't work any harder. I have to figure out a way to make their work pay off. That's my job as the leader of this program. Right now, it hasn't paid off. This wasn't like last week's game.

Last week's game I thought was something that was really, really -- we got out-Rutgersed, and I said that after the game.

But this wasn't that. We couldn't or we didn't. You know, there's an old saying in coaching, "can't and won't, the result's the same." So whatever the result was it was but we've got to get better. That's what we'll do.

**Q. Last two weeks you guys struggled to score. This week was more about the defense. What's your biggest concern with the team right now?**

GREG SCHIANO: Well, we didn't exactly shut them out last week, you know what I mean. So it wasn't just we struggled to score. We didn't stop them. So my biggest concern is I need to do a better job of leading the program. That's my biggest concern, and I've got to figure out how to do that because that's my job. And you know what I'll help other people do their job better, but I've got to do my job better. So that's my No. 1 thing.

**Q. After two weeks of the offense struggling, what did you see from Athan in the balance of the offense in particular?**

GREG SCHIANO: You know, again, it's not just Athan, right. I do think Athan played well. I think that the offensive line gave him time. Protected him pretty well.

Athan did a great job moving in the pocket. I thought he moved -- you know, the way you move in the pocket as a quarterback is critical. If you move with your platform underneath you, you can deliver an accurate pass. He did that. He moved with a great platform and delivered an

accurate pass several times today, which was critical.

And again, I mentioned the young receivers, a guy that you have to make mention is Kyle Monangai, one of the top three toughest guys I've ever coached. I'm not going to get into what he played with, and neither will he. But what he went through today, and especially he took a hit, whatever that was, second quarter, end of second quarter; and for him to return and for him to play the way he did, my hat is off to him. He knows how much I respect his -- not only his game but his toughness.

I'll just close it with this, guys. We will get there. This program will get there. I know that there's going to be certain people that want to cast their ballot and say, oh, we've got big problems.

You call your shot. Just remember, we will get there, I promise you. So you want to call your shot now, just call it. But know that you're calling your shot. This program will be just fine. Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...