

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: Back at it. A really good Maryland team that we're getting ready for.

Offensively very explosive. Coach Locksley does a great job. Certainly he's been a handful for us in our time back. We haven't had a ton of success against them and especially playing on the road.

So we've got our hands full offensively. They are explosive. The Edwards kid, the quarterback, has done a really nice job and he's up at the to be of the league in passing. Receiving room is as good as you'll play against, an NFL receiving room. Felton lead the Big Ten and Prather isn't very far behind. They really do, they have an NFL receiving room.

And then Hemby, he's been playing, it feels like he's been playing forever. Very experienced.

And then the O-line is gigantic. And they made a change here a couple weeks ago, and you know, we all here at Rutgers know Coach Wroblewski very well. A lot of respect for him and the job that he does.

So you know, going to be a huge challenge for our defense for sure. You flip it over, defensively, they are gigantic up front, especially their two interior guys. That's going to be a challenge to get some movement there. They are big, they are strong. They are physical.

Linebacker group, experienced, Hyppolite, another guy that I feel like we've been saying his name for a long, long time. Real good football player.

And then the secondary is quality players, really good, long athletes. So our hands are full and you know, special teams, they do a good job. Some guys we know that are coaching special teams, Coach Zook is back there doing special teams, and I've known Ron for a long time.

So well-coached, quality football game, going on the road and going to be quite a challenge. Try to answer what I can.

Q. Just defensively, what's the key to continue that improvement that the team showed the other day, especially when it comes to tackling and the quality of tackling?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, this is kind of a different operation, what Coach Locksley does offensively is a little different than what we faced last week. It's different every week, right. But this one is quite a bit different.

So we're going to have to have a good plan for sure, put him in position to make those tackles but as I mentioned, some of those names, you know, they are really athletic guys.

So it's going to be really straining to the level that we strain and beyond, that, I think our players should be able to say, all right, that is the standard that we have around here. That's what's it's been around here. Nothing -- nothing lower.

I really believe this. You're either getting better or you're getting worse. You don't say the same. So it's got to be a little bit better or we're getting worse.

But we have to have that kind of commitment for playing for each other and just splattering your body around the field.

Q. We got used to seeing Taulia Tagovailoa the last couple years, and you mentioned the quarterback playing well, maintaining that system and playing well there. Does this offense look different with the change of quarterback, or what's your assessment of the year over year for Maryland?

GREG SCHIANO: A little bit different. But you can see the bones are still the bones, right. And I think they will go into -- they have had a lot of success against us offensively, and certainly we are studying what they did and try to fix some of those things but it's not like we didn't try to do that last year. We just have to go out and play at the quality level that we've played this year, or last week.

We've got to do that and build upon that, and we are



capable of doing that. Now, health comes into play again. So we'll see who can actually do it. We had that extra week to get guys feeling better but now we are back into the weekly grind and so we are going to find out.

Q. You ran some four wide receiver sets which has not been common. Did you just want to change things up?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it speaks to a lot of things. I think it speaks to the where I understand. We have quality where I understand in our program. It speaks to Coach Ciarrocca's experience, that he has the knowledge and that he's comfortable enough to adapt on the fly and it is, you've got to remember, we lost our starting tight end and we lost our second team tight end, right.

And that's the same thing we had at the running back position. We had lost our second team running back and then we lost our first team running back edge you have to be more creative and creative -- when people say the word "creative," it's not always double reverses and flea-flickers. Creative is personnel. Creative is little things that unless you're a coach, you don't have any idea are happening but make a significant difference in the execution.

So we'll continue to pick and product and figure out ways. That's our job. But it's a challenge for sure.

Q. Abram and -- looked like they got banged up at the end of the game. Do you anticipate them playing this season? The injuries look pretty bad.

GREG SCHIANO: We'll do that availability report on Saturday and that will be the technical or the final word on that.

Q. On Wesley Bailey, you touched on it in your postgame presser, but was it a decision for him to redshirt or an injury thing?

GREG SCHIANO: No. He can't play. He's physically unable to play. We held out hope but I think some of that caused some stress, too. You know, so I just -- I wanted to, you know, he needs to get better. He needs to heal, and so it is what it is.

Q. He does have the option to redshirt because he only played four games?

GREG SCHIANO: He does.

Q. Did you talk to him about coming back this year?

GREG SCHIANO: I haven't talked to him about that. Etc.

All been about his health.

Q. Just going back to that D-Line like you mentioned, Bailey out for the year, Kyonte Hamilton has played inside and outside, defensive line, probably his best performance of the season. What can you say about the versatility of some of those guys and how can you repeat that performance this weekend?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I don't know if you can repeat that performance. I hope you can, and better. But I agree with you on Kyonte Hamilton. He's been a stalwart the entire year. He's been the one guy that I've counted on and he's come through every single week. He's played well. He's graded out well every week.

I don't make any of is that stuff public but I'll just share that he's been the most consistent performer each and every week, showing up, doing his job, doing it at multiple positions. Yeah, he's a guy that we really depend on.

Q. Jordan Walker had a big play. Can you talk about how you found him and his development? He was a walk-on who played receiver.

GREG SCHIANO: Sure can. It's a great story, right. Bob Fraser found him up in Rochester, New York and was really, really sold on him and kind of drove the process and really talked me into it. He was a tall, skinny kid, and I don't know, maybe he was 199 pounds, maybe 198, I can't remember exact.

He's now 260-something and he's playing on the edge. Went from wide receiver to tight end to rush end and really, really nice play there, getting a safety. But he's been -- we saw it on scout team. We saw him getting better, and then we saw it in the spring doing it against our own people.

But again, he had never done it, right. And he just keeps showing up and working really, really hard. He's one of the hardest trainers in the summer, and when he came to training camp he's one of the hardest working guys and every day comes to work with a great attitude. He's a great example for people in our program, and I think the best is yet to come for him.

I think when you look at him, he looks like he walked out of giant training camp. The guy is a tremendous physical specimen, and he's made himself into that. You talk about a self-made player. Jordan Walker is a self-made player.

Q. Your wide receivers, K.J. and Ian, unique back story, playing at the same high school. Both emerging. What has their development meant for your offense?

GREG SCHIANO: Ian's been a big part of our offense last year and this year, right, and the best part about Ian is we recruited him to be a safety. Ian played wide out in high school but only on game day. He trained as a DW all week, and they put him in and told him what route to run. Talk about a guy who has relatively not a lot of experience and can be as good as we've had here. The sky is the limit. It's all going to be a matter of him staying healthy and him be able to continue to grow with.

Coach Brock and with Coach Perry. There's not two better receiver coaches in America. To have them both here, I think that's part of the reason the receiver room keeps getting better and better.

But those two guys are awfully talented, and to think that they were on the same high school team, they won some games. There's a reason teams win games.

Q. With Antwan Raymond, what stood out when you were recruiting him and what have you seen in his progress over the last few months as he's gotten seemingly better and better?

GREG SCHIANO: Antwan is a neat kid. The whole story on that is amazing. We were recruiting him like a lot of people were and the program discontinues at his school. We saw that he could graduate and re-class. We kind of moved on it quickly. And we had a great relationship we and his mom, and one thing led to another and all of a sudden he's on our campus training.

You could just tell he was a little bit more mature physically and emotionally. Really tough. And willing to do whatever -- whatever was asked, and again, I think Coach Shaw does a great job with those guys. If you look, like I said, guys, it's the third and fourth running back.

You can say what you want but we have not been in that position in years past where our third or fourth running back would be able to step in and win a Big Ten game and rush for over a hundred combined. I'm proud of those guys and I'm proud of Coach Shaw the way he's prepared his room, and we've just got to keep going.

If we can get Kyle back, and now we have some guys -- we knew what Bengie could do.

To your redshirt question, we were trying to redshirt Bengie and we effectively are going to be able to now which is important.

So just see where the chips fall here this week and we'll get them all ready and whoever can play, you know, they will be the guys that play.

Q. Taj got the start at safety over December manned and looked like you used primarily Tyreem Powell and Dariel at linebacker. Were those changes coming out of the bye week game-specific for Minnesota and do you anticipate them being the rest of the season, and specifically at linebacker, how much did it help to have the same two guys mostly in the same spots, and did the continuity help you defensively?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know if it was the continuity or the same two guys. The fact of the matter is Tyreem Powell was healthy. Wasn't a hundred percent, don't misunderstand that, but he was a lot closer than he was out at SC and he could not have gone that many plays at Southern Cal.

Tyreem is a pro football player. So when he's in there, it's not just a lot of things, technically and mentally, he's special, and then his physical attributes, there was a couple times, he's 255-pound guy that when he hits the lineman, he knocks them back. He's got great snap and he made some real big-time plays, and I still feel bad for him because he's probably 85 percent. He's still not a hundred percent but him at 85 is better than most at a hundred.

Moses Walker is a real good football player, and you know, but they were playing really well and sometimes when you get two guys that are hot together, you don't want to break it up and we talked a number of times, is this the time to get Moses in because we want to get him in. We have to find a way to get him on the field. He's too good of a player to stand next to us. We'll figure something out package-wise.

I can't tell you that we definitely thought that's the way the game would go with those two but we kept asking him, how are you feeling and he kept saying, I'm good. He's a grown man. He'll share with me when he's not feeling right. He'll say, "I need a blow, Coach."

Q. And Taj playing majority of the snaps at safety?

GREG SCHIANO: I think he started opening game, right. The guy has been through it as a freshman. But he keeps getting better and better. We think there's high promise. We think we have some really good young safeties that you haven't seen very much of yet.

But I thought, you know, you saw what Flip looks like when he feels a little bit better. Sometimes you forget, he is a special player. He just has not been able to run very well and stop and all those things.

So to see him out there not a hundred, he's probably 80

but he's such a good player, when he hits you, you feel it. They felt it Saturday and you could see him making football player plays.

Dez is a good football player. It was one of those deals, there wasn't a ton of plays, and we were getting off the field. So when you have got something cooking, you don't always have to mess it up.

Now up front we rotate constantly, so that's just the norm, but in the back seven, it was going well and we kept it going well.

Q. Just on Athan's performance on Saturday, played incredibly well, had big throws, big touchdown. Just talk about his progress over the last several weeks and as gets better and better every week. And you mentioned a lot of injuries, personnel changes, his ability to manage the offense and go out there and execute for you guys?

GREG SCHIANO: Athan has done a good job and is getting better every week, and we're going to need to. This Maryland group, they are going to get after us in the front. The back end, they are long. You can't miss by much, right. They are really good at taking the football away. Very opportunistic group.

But he is getting better. I was really, really pleased and am really pleased. There's a couple balls he would have had back Saturday if he could and we have to try to eliminate those. Those are going to be key.

Now coming down the stretch, every game, if we do what we are supposed to do, every game is going to be tight and you can't make those errors. Like you see plays, as I always say, games take on a life their own and it's one or two games that guide the game in a whole different direction.

I always tell the players, I wish I could tell you those plays and then we could kind of just go golfing but that ain't the way it works, right. You have to play every single play as hard as you can and when those plays come up, then you're in position to make them.

So that will be the task Saturday night for sure. It's a tough environment. Weather is going to start to become an issue now. It's starting to turn into the fall here in the northeast. A whole different set of circumstances and we've got to be ready for that. So that's what this week is about, preparing for this event, for this game and getting ready to go. I'm confident our guys will.

A couple things I wanted to mention. I talked to you

coming into the bye week, the long trip back from California and all that. I was really proud of our guys attacked the academics, too. We're now in a period where it's a very, very busy time. Things are coming due, and that was a huge amount of pressure on our guys as well as getting ready for the Minnesota game. I was pleased with that.

I would be remiss if I didn't wish everything a happy Veteran's Day. I think today is a day that sometimes flies under the radar and it can't. It just can't. Because the people that served, have given their lives for us to live the way we do, I think it's something that we all need to appreciate, and I know I do, and I know you guys do, too. Just thought I need to make sure I mention that.

We'll see you on Saturday.

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