

Rutgers University Football

Media Conference

Monday, December 16, 2024

Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

Greg Schiano

Press Conference



GREG SCHIANO: Thanks for coming out and covering us. We've had some good practices, and we'd better because Kansas State. You know I've spent a lot of time studying them. They are a really good team. Some of the games that they lost easily could have or should have been wins.

So when you look at them, this is quite a formidable opponent. Offensively their quarterback is special. He does everything well. They have speed. Speed maybe unlike we've seen in a couple of spots. Defensively, they have some guys that really understand what they are doing with their scheme. They really are a well-coached team. Same thing with special teams. They have a plan and you can see their plan each week. In many ways, it's like looking in the mirror a little bit; that they play hard. Their kids play -- I like to think our kids play hard. They play hard.

So it's going to be quite a challenge. We kind of transferred over from developmental to game plan install now. So now we are working on one thing and that's getting ready for this game.

So some guys that had had a little more rest and a little less practice will probably be a little sore tomorrow. They have had a little bit of time off now to get back at it.

So very excited about getting into this, the real meat and potatoes of getting prepared. Whenever you have a really formidable opponent like they are, you can feel it. So it's going to be a good opportunity.

Q. Coaching-wise how have you been handling the defensive responsibilities, and what's the plan for the Bowl game?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, we have been doing it as a defensive staff, all of us working together. Really a great, unselfish group. Everybody is just pitching in. You know we've cursed Joe a few times when it takes a little longer when he's not here because he was in charge of running everything. Everybody's picking up the pieces. So we've had some late night trying to put it together.

Q. You mentioned their speed. What positions and what stands out?

GREG SCHIANO: Just look on offense at number 3 and number 1, those guys are rare and then the quarterback is rare. The quarterback in high school timed at like a 4:53 in high school. So who knows what he's running now.

That's usual. That brings you back to the Pat White days when we used to be here in West Virginia. Pat White was the fastest guy on the field. I don't know if he's that because No. 3 is really super fast. He ran a 4:3-something in high school. You're looking at elite speed guys and it shows. It jumps off the table.

Q. The defense had a lot of success in the final month of the regular season. Obviously you've had more time to pour over all that film, what can you guys do and what has the defense tried to do in this last month to elevate that and take that another step further for this Bowl game?

GREG SCHIANO: I think Joe and the entire staff did a great job, like we said earlier. We were really struggling midseason and just kind of stripped it down and built it back up.

Whenever there's changes like this, it can be growth or you could slip back. So hopefully it's a growth opportunity for us but we'll find out on the 26th.

Q. How do you keep the momentum going for the team with such a long break between games, with the last game being end of November?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm not sure that actually happens. It's a whole season unto itself, Bowl season. I think because you take that break and then you get back to it with the guys that are actually going to play a majority of the reps.

So I think it's a one-game -- they are all one-game seasons. This is a one-game extended season with a series of practices that go into it.

Q. Offense has scored 30-plus points in the last three



games. How much confidence does that give you with that side of the ball going into the Bowl game?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I think offensively we have been finding our stride, even through some injuries. The tight end situation, I don't know if I've seen something -- I shouldn't say that. 1994, we started our sixth safety in the Rose Bowl. I've seen it once. It wasn't great.

Q. With the situation at the defensive coordinator spot does that allow for fresh ideas to do some new things, more than just wrinkles but maybe bring in new ideas from different people in the staff?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't think, because it's about the players more than us. They need to be able to execute it. I think one of the things that helped us get out of our little slump there was we simplified less, not more.

Sometimes less is more, and I think we've got to be careful because certainly guys do have ideas but they are so multiple on offense, they do it all. They will get an inverted bone. They will get unbalanced. They will get empty, no vacs, just about everything on your checklist that you have to do in training camp, they do.

Yeah, like I said, thanks, Joe.

Q. You guys signed two defensive tackles and a running back out of the portal. What characteristics are you looking, at what other positions hoping to target in the rest of the window?

GREG SCHIANO: Any time we can find a player, we use the portal predominately to fill needs for next season, right.

Occasionally we'll get a younger guy that has a few years left, and then we've got to look at it in relation to our younger guys and say, you know, do we feel they can compete and possibly win the job as a younger guy.

The older guys we bring in, we expect them to play. That's why we are bringing them in the portal. Where we're headed, again, it all fits. Not only are they good enough player, because certainly we wouldn't even be discussing but are they a cultural fit, and you use that to find out, every connection, every resource that you know that's had an opportunity to be around the young man who know us, is this guy a fit for our program.

And is it a hundred percent? No. But we've spent hours back, you know, searching background, to make sure -- the tape is the tape and it tells you, but the other part I think is just as important.

Q. You touched on Joe already, but when you have an extended season to prepare, how important is it to keep up that continuity on the offensive side of the coaching staff?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, it's very important. Look, continuity is always good. But when you have good coaches -- I joke about Joe. I'm thrilled for Joe and his family as I said. I think he's going to do a tremendous job the UMass. He's a great Coach, not a good one.

But continuity is nice. For the head coach, it's nice. When you lose a coach, especially a leader on one side of the ball or the other, I don't think you can imagine the amount of work that creates for a head coach, not only getting ready for a Bowl game and all that stuff but getting the next guy. That's why it takes some time. Sometimes it happens immediately and sometimes it takes a long time.

Q. As far as Bowl preparation last year, you had the advantage of playing fairly close to home at Yankee Stadium and this year you go out to Arizona. Obviously you've seen this before many times in Bowl games but with this group, how do you get this these guys ready to go on the road for a Bowl game like this?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, we move the whole operation to wherever we're going. The one thing that was unique to Pinstripe Bowl is we bussed back here to practice.

So we were home every day to practice and then we went back to the City and enjoy all the stuff. Now we are getting on I plane and going whatever it is, three quarters the way across country, maybe further, whatever it is. All it is is the plane ride, length of the plane ride. And once you get there, you set up shop in the hotel, all your meeting rooms it's very similar to being in our building except you don't have all the amenities.

Q. With Belichick taking the North Carolina story, big story in college football. You're close with him. Did he consult with you and if he did what did you tell him?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, my private conversations with Coach will be just that but I am thrilled for him. He's done so much for my career and for my family that I can't ever repay him. I can't ever thank him enough.

I'm excited for him. I could see he's excited. You know, and for he and Michael to be together, they have done this a few times now together. Yeah, it's only going to make all of us work harder. They are going to do a great job and I'm excited to watch what they do, and happy for him. Really happy.

Q. Did he consult with you?

GREG SCHIANO: Like I said, I didn't answer that. So to be clear, my private conversation with him is private.

Q. Dymere Miller, what did you see from him just this whole year and what kind of impact did he have on the offense?

GREG SCHIANO: He was a great addition, right, and you never know, like I said, when you bring these guys in from the portal. But you know, Coach Brock, myself, Coach Perry, we have all been in the NFL and we have all done free agent visits. I think that helped to really get to the bottom of, is he a guy that can help us.

I think we have some experience on that side of the ball that is huge in personnel and game planning. But Dymere Miller has been a phenomenal addition, if not the best portal receiver in the Big Ten, one of them, right, as far as production goes, and boy, are we thankful we have him.

Now if we can continue to build -- again, we have some really good young wide-outs. We have to continue to build and we'll try to possibly bring another portal receiver in just to bridge that gap a little bit. Before but if we can bring in another Dymere Miller, we'll be blessed.

Q. How is the availability report looking in terms of health of the team, and have you had those conversations with players who may or may not be playing in this game, have those conversations been kind of finalized?

GREG SCHIANO: Finalized, no. But that's a Wednesday issue, not a Friday issue. We'll get into that then. It's well-chronicled, right. We've been beaten. We have some real injuries that are season-ending that are not coming back for the Bowl game.

Then we had some injuries in the game at Michigan State. I've just got to fight through it and next man up, next man up mentality, everybody says it, and sometimes it is. Sometimes you move guys positions and sometimes you do whatever you have to do to field the most competitive team you have.

The guys are working and that I appreciate and I know our medical staff has been kept very busy. I thank them for the great job they are doing.

Q. How is the way that you prepare for Bowl games evolved over the years from the time you started as a head coach in terms of practice time with veterans,

developmental guys, things like that?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm truly pleased for a lot of reasons to work with Coach Paterno at Penn State when I worked for him. But he was the best at Bowl games. I mean, his record says so.

But also, just the way he handled the whole organization. I thought he did a great job. So I mimic a lot of it from -- from him. I think our players would tell you, they get to really enjoy the Bowl game but they also work really hard in preparation for it.

So if you can find that happy medium, I think your players appreciate it and they have a great experience. If you work them too hard, then they don't want to go to a Bowl game. What's the motivation. If you don't work them hard enough, you beat your ears beat in. It's a delicate balance. But like I said, I was blessed to learn from the best. I think we have involved a little bit but not very much, really.

Guys, again, appreciate you covering us. I know the kids are coming in here in a minute. I'll see you guys down in Arizona, those of who you make the trip, and those who don't, I'll soak up some of that sun for you, how's that? Thanks, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...