

# Rutgers University Football Media Conference

Saturday, April 26, 2025  
Piscataway, New Jersey, USA

## Greg Schiano

### Postgame Press Conference

Spring Game

#### Q. What did you think of AJ?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I thought AJ controlled the offense pretty well. You know, made some good throws, some completions. It was good for him to, get him out there playing in a game situation. He did a good job.

#### Q. Anything you can share on Mohamed Toure entering the portal yesterday? Any insight on his decision?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, you know, been around here, I keep it to the guys on the team. Mo and I have a special relationship. I love the guy. But he's gone another direction, and we've got a really fine football that I'm excited to coach. So that's where I'll stick.

#### Q. To go into the portal, try to get a linebacker to fill in the spot that he left?

GREG SCHIANO: As you know, we are always evaluating what's in the portal, and if we feel that we can make our football team better then we will actively get engaged with players. I really am excited about Djabome. He really had a breakout year last year. He's had a really good spring.

Moses Walker had a really good spring. They have been getting these reps all of '24, right.

So I'm excited. And guys like, when you look and you see Abe is going to be coming back from his injury, Sam Robinson I thought really had a good spring and is coming on to the scene.

I hate to mention names because you leave people out. We'll be fine. And if there's someone in the portal that makes us a better football team, then we'll do everything we can to try to get them.

#### Q. Two big performances from your freshmen receivers, Vernon Allen and Jourdin Houston. What



#### can you tell me about them?

GREG SCHIANO: I think they came in here and they really tried, both of those guys, really attacked it. Attacked the classroom, attacked the on-field practice and preparation. I think Coach Brock and Coach McNulty have done a good job with all those young receivers, making sure they get a lot of work, a lot of technique stuff. I think that's an exciting room; the youth and the experience both, that has a chance.

#### Q. Looking at the run game on offense, down some of the guys in the running back resume, guys that don't playing experience yet, what did you see from that room?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't know exactly, I didn't really play too close attention to our play selection. But I think some guys got an opportunity to run in game situations, which is great. That's what they need to really get better.

You know, we had kind of a -- the offensive line was out after the first series, so the starting offensive line. It was good. The run game is made up of all pieces. It's the line; it's the back; it's the receivers blocking on the perimeter, and it's the quarterback making sure we are in the right play and doing the right thing.

Overall, I thought this spring it's been pretty good. Today I couldn't tell you if it was worth anything.

#### Q. How important was the decision in court for Jett and for the team?

GREG SCHIANO: I'm thrilled. I'm thrilled for Jett. He's a quality young man and a guy that we are thrilled to have on our football team and I'm really excited for Rutgers. Jett make us a better football team. Just glad that it all worked out the right way.

#### Q. What was that like personally for you to be sitting in a courthouse in the middle of the portal, witness stand and all that?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, I was trying not to look at my phone too much because I didn't know what the protocol



was but I had to. I had to look at my phone when I wasn't up there because a lot of stuff was going on.

But I'm really thrilled that, like I said, that Jett is able to play and he's part of the team. He really is a great teammate and a guy that came in here and has really done very, very well. He practiced every practice with us and has done very well.

**Q. What did you learn about your team, especially on the defensive side of the ball with so much turnover?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think we are going to have -- you know, you saw the awards, right, and Zaire Angoy, Most Improved Defensive Player. I think he had a great spring and we need him to. We replacing some guys up front.

I think we are going to do it with numbers. We have good numbers in our defensive front and we are going to roll guys and that's -- I like to play that way. I think that's the best way to play.

But we are going to have to just become much more technically correct and we're going to have to become tougher up front, and that's what training camp is going to be about and this summer we are going to get more explosive.

I thought this spring we improved every practice. That's all you can ask from your guys.

**Q. To build on the receiver point, in the first half there were a bunch of acrobatic catches, 50/50 jump, go-get-it situations, how confident are you in that receiving room and how deep that is now and in general, can the fans and supporters expect possibly more 50/50 balls down the field during the season?**

GREG SCHIANO: Look, I'm excited. I don't want to ordain the three rookies as Hall of Fame-calibre guys, right. They are working. They are getting better and I like it. The guy we left off, I call him MJ3. He's also doing very well.

So I'm excited about their youth and their performance but we've got a lot of work to do, right. It was exciting today but we've got a lot of work to do this summer. It will be good to get Ian back eventually. That's been a void. I thought K.J. had a great spring. Worked hard. Got himself -- he improved considerably. Yeah, I do. I think we have a chance to have a really good receiver room and when you have young guys that are getting better all the time it just raises the bottom of the room.

So it will be great for everybody involved. You know, DBs that have to cover him all practice, all training camp,

everything will rise with their calibre.

**Q. DJ McClary, what did you see from him today from all spring? He just looked real comfortable out there today.**

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, DJ, he's a run and hit guy, right. He's very athletic. He made a few plays in the open field where he tracked down the running back and made a good open field tackle. So I was very pleased with that.

I thought that in the spring in general, he made great leaps and bounds throughout the spring. He's a much better player in practice, whatever it is, the end of spring, compared to practice one. If he can continue doing that, he'll be a great linebacker around here because he's got the raw ability for sure.

**Q. Earlier you added two new transfers, Moshood Giwa and Oliver Billotte. What will they bring to the program?**

GREG SCHIANO: That's "Bill-let," and, well, hopefully they will bring really good offensive line play and really good defensive line play.

A lot of things, like when it's new to the fan base and new to you guys, it's not always new to us. That's a little bit -- seemed like it happened a while ago. But we have it continually look. The transfer portal is real, college football, that's the world we're in.

So we have to constantly mine that but it's got to be guys that fit our culture. I think those guys do, as the other guys that we brought in, I feel they do.

The minute you start reaching to get a player because you need it, you've got to be careful because then it can really disrupt the apple cart here that we've put together.

So I'm excited about those two, and there could be a couple more. You know, we're working hard at that, and there's really no back end to that, right. It's just you had to be in the portal by midnight last night.

But you can bring guys on to your roster all the way up through before you first game. So we'll keep working it, and as we always do, if there's someone that can help our roster be better, we'll do everything we can to get them here.

**Q. What's the difference between Athan now than maybe a year ago with a year in the system and what's the ceiling on him now based on that?**

GREG SCHIANO: I think the difference is just what you pointed out, right. He's got a whole year of experience in this offense at Rutgers. He had a year but he wasn't the guy-guy at Minnesota when he was playing under Kirk, and then Kirk left and he was the guy but it wasn't under Kirk.

So to have him have a full season working under Coach Ciarrocca, and then have an off-season with our team where he could, you know -- now that he's had those results he's had, and established himself as a key performer, when you show that you can do it, your credibility goes up.

Now I think that it gives you a chance to be a quarterback/leader that we need him to be. And his performance, I thought he really improved this spring. He did not sit back and say, Oh, I had a pretty good year and I think it's all -- he worked his tail off and he got better so now this summer, we've got to just copy that again and get better again, right, because summer is not what it used to be. Summer is a time that we can really get some considerable development, not just conditioning.

Coach Ciarrocca and the offensive staff will make sure that happens. Athan is football guy. Like he eats, drinks and sleeps it. Any way that he can get better, he will.

**Q. With Johnny going in the portal, do you feel like you have to add another body to the quarterback room, and how comfortable would you feel if today AJ Surace had to go into a game, heaven forbid?**

GREG SCHIANO: I believe in AJ; so I'm very comfortable if he had to go into a game. But it would be his first game. So certainly that's not great. But everybody has their first game at some point.

But he works really hard, AJ does and prepares incredibly well, as that whole room does. You know, are we going to -- I don't publicly comment, are we going to go get a quarterback, not get a quarterback, we are always looking at the portal and if it's a fit, like I said, we'll go get him and if not we'll sit tight.

Sometimes the best players you get are the ones you don't get. You've got to make sure that you bring people in here that are a cultural alignment to what we do, and I think our staff does a good job of doing just that.

Guys, I appreciated all spring, coming out, we had the crazy weather, 80s and then 40s and then 20s, but you guys were soldiers coming out every day. I appreciate that, and we'll see you when we get back here, I guess for training camp.

Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...