

Rutgers University Football Media Conference

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Greg Schiano

Press Conference

GREG SCHIANO: Appreciate you coming out. Exciting day around here. Very excited about the 21 young men that signed with us this morning.

I think that a great fit for our program, what makes them a great fit, I think it's a long athletic class that loves football and they are a great cultural fit. When you take those three things, those are things I've asked our coaches and players to really go after and make sure that it's not just a great player. That's an easy thing to do. You throw the tape on and get the measurables and you know that (snapping fingers) but really dig and make sure they are a cultural fit or our program.

Thrilled with this group. They have great balance offense, defense, positionally, things I felt we needed in our program and really pleased with the people that we're bringing into our program as well as the players.

Rather than me expound on all this stuff, I'll open it up to questions and help you get whatever information you need.

Q. What did you like about the quarterback, Xavier, and in an ideal world, is this the style of quarterback you get, you have A.J. in the wings for two years, and two other developmental guys behind him starting a pipeline at the position?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a good question, yeah, Xavier is a really fine quarterback and athlete. Big guy. Can really zip it. But it's hard in this day and age with quarterbacks. And you try to have one every year, bring one in every year that you really feel good about, and then let them compete.

And that's what will happen now, right. We had an incumbent starter. Had a starter for two years, and now there will be a quarterback competition at Rutgers, and someone will seize the opportunity and become the new starter.

I think that's the way it's going to be a lot of places across the country, and some of the guys will be portal guys. Some of the guys will be high school guys, and it's just --



you just let them go have at it. The guys who come here are going to be throwing to some really good receivers. Going to have a good O-line and good running back -- good running backs with them. I think it's an opportunity for all the quarterbacks to step up.

Q. When you bring in players, I hear the term cultural fit what does that mean and why is that important to you?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think the thing that makes our program special is our culture, right, and you see it on that wall over there, "Family, Trust, Chop," what does that mean? Real willy to summarize it, it's unselfish people that are men of their word. They say it, they do it; and that have the want to learn how to chop.

You don't necessarily have to come here -- I tell them, you bring unselfishness to this program, right, you bring oneness, what we call oneness; when your words and your actions consistently match. You bring those two things. Because I can't -- when they get here and they are 18 years old, I cannot put that in them. They were either raised that way or they weren't.

What we teach them is how to chop, and to me that skill is the single biggest skill that they leave here with, right. The mental toughness that it takes to stay focused on that spot over and over and over again and just keep doing it, no matter if things are going well, if things are not going well. Most days are just kind of as they are, but the ability to chop through whatever is happening and get to the finish.

And you know, I think we have a group of guys that really want that. And that's the exciting thing to me, and that's critical, whether it be in high school recruiting now or in portal recruiting, you have to make sure. Otherwise, you're just -- you know, you're spinning your wheels.

Q. How much do you think the development and the way that KJ Duff and Ian Strong have played here have helped bring in wide receiver prospects like Carter, guys seeing the way you can develop and have that type of production?

GREG SCHIANO: I don't think there's any doubt about it,



right. And as much to that, the performance on the field, well, how it they get there, right. Well, Dave Brock is an exceptional receivers coach. John McNulty, his assistant, is an exceptional receivers coach. These guys both have years of NFL experience coaching some of the most elite receivers in the history of the game of football.

What a fortunate situation for a young receiver to come here under their tutelage and get better and better and better and my hat is off to them because Brock really runs the room in a very, very definitive way, right. He understands exactly in recruiting who we're looking for. He understands my -- what my desires are. And then he goes out and he finds those players with the help of our personnel office, and really, locks in and get the guys that we want.

So that's what happened here. I think we have two elite receivers, nationally elite receivers, that will join a group of elite receivers, and what happens is that room kind of fuels a lot of movement.

Q. You guys were able to flip Devonte Anderson just a couple days ago. What put you guys over the top and what does he mean for the program?

GREG SCHIANO: I really love Devonte. I told him when we were recruiting him before he had committed to another school, he was really one of my top guys. And I think the persistence of our staff, Damiere Shaw, who has done a great job in so many of these recruits battles this year, just stayed on it. Just kept battling away and staying in contact, and knowing that great recruiters -- people think great recruiters are the guys that can connect with the young people.

I was 50-something-years old at Ohio State recruiting kids; it wasn't that I was their age. Recruiting is like everything else, if you chop every day and you stay in contact and you do the things that make people feel like, you know what, I have a real relationship with this coach and with this program, that's the difference to me.

And Damiere Shaw, our whole staff did a great job. But Damiere Shaw, with this particular instance, kept in contact and was able to deliver at a time when it was very tumultuous with coaching movement and all kind of things going on across our game.

I think if you can stay consistent, you're not going to get every one but it's important that consistency in recruiting is critical. You pick the guy -- you know, you if I can out who the guys you want to go after, and then you have to lock in, laser lights on those guys and go get them.

Q. You guys brought in two linebackers this cycle, Tanner and Joey, two guys that primarily played offense for their high school teams. How hard is it to evaluate guys for a position that they don't play a lot in high school?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, they actually did play the position. So it wasn't as hard as you make it out to seem.

But I do agree -- I think high school athletes, like I said earlier, one of the things that I love about our class, long and athletic, and if I left out a word, can run. Those are the three things. When you have long athletes that can run, that's a great place to start, and the best linebackers I've ever coached were running backs, right. Some of them were quarterbacks. I never worry about that.

I look for the skills and abilities, then I look for the person. And you put those two together, after doing it as long as I have, I think you can say, you know, this guy is going to be a great linebacker.

Those two guys will be great players in college. There's no doubt in my mind.

So I'm excited. They are joining a great room there. A bunch of young talented guys. Some from last year's class. Many from the year before, and really excited to see them develop.

Q. Looking at this offensive line class as a whole, there's a lot of size and athleticism. What do you think is the biggest thing that sticks out to the collective offensive line class that you're bringing in?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think you hit it on the head. They are big. They are long and they are athletic. You know, one of the things that is critical to me when you look at offensive lineman, are they natural benders, right. You've got to play the game. There's a saying in football, low man wins, right. Well, you've got 6'7 guys, 6'6 guys. It's hard to get low. And the ability to bend naturally, can we help a guy who he gets here become a better bender? Absolutely.

But when guys can do it naturally, it's a great starting point. Now you really work on it, and they become elite benders, and the ability to play and play in the offensive line, if you're an athlete, those things go hand-in-hand.

Q. With NIL and the transfer portal and everything else, does constructing a recruiting class take on a different shape now in that you have to have a certain amount of developmental players, high-end players, and maybe that changes your approach in how you

piece together a class?

GREG SCHIANO: Yeah, it all has to fit together, and that's a great question. Because I was just visiting with one of my friends in the National Football League who is a general manager, and we were talking this morning about going over some principles of building your roster out. It keeps coming back to: You have to look at -- there has to be someone or someones that looking at the roster 360, right, 360 degrees and 365 days a year.

People say, what are you going to do for recruiting? We were already -- this class was signed by 7:10, and we were right back onto the portal class that we're working on right now. Like there's no time. Recruiting is a 365-day-a-year event. No matter how hard that game was Saturday night, I was here, I don't know, three hours after the game meeting with recruits and families. It never stops. If you -- you know, especially at Rutgers. I mean, we have to continue every single day.

There's some blue blood programs that maybe can get away with a little bit. We can't. I've said it over and over again, you have to know who you are and where you are, and how to operate in that environment. And I think one thing that our coaches do a tremendous job of is persistence and consistency, and if you can do that over and over and over again, and they really get to know who we are, the right ones end up coming here. And the ones that are not right for this place, they kind of separate themselves, and we don't really have to do that.

But that takes time. That doesn't happen overnight. But to your question, constructing that class, you have to look at in a holistic manner and say, Okay, where do we need immediate help. Now, that didn't used to be something you could address, right it. Had to be purely through development and maybe junior college, but we haven't done a lot in that realm. We haven't gotten real involved in the junior college recruiting scene, just from our academic situation. It's not a great fit.

But what we have done is look in the portal now and say, okay, these are our immediate needs, to be successful in '26. These are our developmental needs. Now can they cross over sometimes? Yeah, there's definitely a few freshmen in this class that will definitely help us play on the field in '26, there's no doubt in my mind. But you can't really sit there and say of a 21-man class, 15 of them are going to be on that field having an impact in the games come September. That, I don't think is realistic.

So being able to look at the class and the program, where do we need immediate help, work that into your numbers -- and it's all about, you know, it used to just be scholarship

numbers. Now it's scholarship numbers. It's revenue share numbers, etc., all that stuff. It's NIL numbers. You have to be able to project that constantly, and that's why so much of college football has grown and mushroomed.

We have an entire -- we built out an entire college personnel office that does nothing but work on evaluating college football players, guys that we think might go into the portal, guys that do go into the portal. If you're waiting till the day they go into the portal to do your investigation, you're light years behind, right.

So that's what's really becoming that mushrooming effect around college football is, there's a whole 'nother subset that has to be evaluated, and you don't even know if they are going to be available.

So it really is quite a challenge, one that people said, What was the biggest thing you got more involved with, the defense? And the biggest thing is it takes you away from this stuff on a daily basis. It takes you away from doing all of the things you need to be able to do with portal evaluations and portal forecasting and all those things.

So getting this class signed was critical. I'm really excited about them. But like I said, it's right on to the portal, and without a Bowl game, right, the one thing that's a positive, we can work full force on that. And if you have to find a positive, that's it. I'm not saying I ever want to do it again, ever, but we quickly move on to the next thing around here. And once it wasn't a Bowl game, then it was time to -- everybody in the program, focus.

But you've got to remember, the '27s and the '28s and the '29s, they are still being recruited every day. It's nonstop. We recruit three to four classes, as well as the portal consecutively, all the time.

Q. Two New Jersey recruits in this class, relatively low number compared to previous years. Is that reflective of an expanding footprint that you are able to go into other states to find talent, or is it more the way it shook out this year?

GREG SCHIANO: I think it's more of a factor that we are going to make sure that we take guys that we feel fit our program and I think it's cyclical. Last year we took 11 guys from New Jersey. So it's certainly not Jersey/not Jersey. We want to always make our presence and our footprint, for sure, New Jersey, New York, eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, Southern Connecticut, that's our footprint, right, you draw a circle.

But we are going to recruit at least this half of the country, and if there's a reason to go elsewhere where there's



players with a connection, we'll do that, as well. But we are going to make sure that we get the guys that fit our program, and that's exhausting, for sure.

But some years, it just falls that way. Other years, it doesn't. But I'm not going to do -- ever, am I just going to say, well, I'm going to take this guy because he's from mouth or he's from New York. Because at the end of the day, people worry about this press conference. I don't worry about this press conference. I have very little concern over it.

I want to make sure that those guys, when I show up in winter conditioning, when I show up in spring practice, when I show up to training camp, that I love coaching them. A mentor of mine, Coach Paterno, used to say, "Don't worry about the ones you don't get. Make sure you love coaching the ones you got," and I live by that. And of those 21 guys, I'm really certain I'm going to love coaching every one of them.

Q. You've already had success in Florida recruiting but now it seems like you're going up the East Coast. Any reason why Georgia, Virginia, like you're hitting some players in other states?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think being in the Big Ten Conference makes you a much more national brand, right. So now all of a sudden, these guys are seeing Rutgers more and more. They are hearing about Rutgers more and more than the first time I was here.

And again, it also comes down to the person who recruits an area. I mean, I think you would be foolish to think, it's no different than sales in business, right, when you have someone who is really good and really persistent and can really make hey in an area, all of a sudden that area becomes productive for you.

Scott Vallone has done a great job in North Carolina. He busts his tail down there and has created kind of a niche for himself. North Carolina is kind of dead smack -- it's not a flight. You can drive it, maybe not; it's too far. There's a lot of good programs in North Carolina. He went in there and rolled his sleeves up, and we've gotten some really about players in the state.

So it's a combination of all the things but anywhere where there's an airport and people can get in and out easily, I think it's an easy sell because a great academic institution and what we're building here from a football perspective.

Q. I know in the past, you said it's a group effort for the coaches when it comes to recruiting guys. You mentioned Damiere Shaw before, and we hear about

him a lot talking to recruits. What is his second sauce on the recruiting trail?

GREG SCHIANO: He works very hard at it, I know that, and he along with a bunch of other coaches do that. Damiere is a younger guy who is an established coach. He's produced players. You look at the guys that he's coached in his room, in his own room, in the running back room. Kyle is doing well the in evidently. Antwan is doing really well in the Big Ten. And he's a local guy. He's a Philly guy, that understands the landscape here very, very well.

But at the end of the day, I always look at coaches, why they are great recruiters, it's who they are, and how they connect, and how persistent they are in doing it over and over and over again, and that's one thing that Damiere did an awesome job of.

Q. You mentioned the transfer portal as part of recruiting, so I'm just going to ask the question: With NIL and kind of looking ahead towards the portal, are you confident that the fund, the resources, are going to be there for you to be able to go out there and address the needs for your roster build?

GREG SCHIANO: I am. Yeah, I am. It's a great question.

We're working our tails off. Kelly and her people are working their tails off. I mea, everybody -- everybody is on one mission, right. And as we said to each other after that tough, tough loss (pounding podium): '26 starts tomorrow morning. So get up, everybody get up, get ready to fight and let's go. We've got work to do.

And it's fun to feel like, you know what, across the street at Rodkin, there are people working just as hard as we are down here. And everybody is set on one vision: To make sure that this turns into a championship program.

So, yes, I'm confident that that's going to happen and I'm confident that we're going to use those funds like surgically to make sure that we fill the needs that we need to fill for this '26 season.

I think I heard you say last question, right? A couple things that I'd like to do. I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize Eric Josephs who is our director of recruiting, our assistant GM on the personnel side; and Jordan Wolkstein, who is our assistant GM on the personnel side. Those two guys have done an incredible job consistently year round, and I'm not the easiest guy to do that for. Because I'll do this; I'll do this; I'll do all these things, and all of a sudden it will be nine o'clock and say, "Let's get started."



And they look at me at nine o'clock at night and they look at me like, "All right, let's go."

Some people say, "Let's get started" at nine o'clock -- "Get started? I was heading out."

Those two guys are perfect for me because they are constantly on it and they live it. When you have people like that that are passionate, love the program, love the university and are willing to do whatever it takes, it's only a matter of time.

And that would be my message to our fans. That would be my message to the recruits that are signing. And that would be my message to the guys on our football team; it's only a matter of time, and these guys are certainly going to be a big help in that effort.

Again, guys, as I do every time, I want to thank you for covering our team. I know there's a lot of people that care about Rutgers and Rutgers Football and you're able to get the message out there, and it means a lot to us, so thanks.

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