

Big Ten Football Media Days

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Rutgers Scarlet Knights Coach Greg Schiano

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Coach Schiano, we'll begin with your opening statement.

GREG SCHIANO: Thank you. It's great to be here again. I feel blessed to be a member of the Big Ten Conference. At Rutgers that's something that early on in my tenure, the first time, going back to 2002, I can remember sitting in the room after my radio show with Tim Perneti and saying, You know what? We don't belong where we are. We need to get into the Big Ten. That started a 13-year quest.

To be in here, we feel blessed. I really feel especially appreciative for Commissioner Petitti. The job he has done in a year, he and his staff, is just tremendous. To Tony, thank you for everything.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank our president, Jonathan Holloway. Between Jonathan and our Board of Governors, I have never felt like Rutgers, the university, the football program, have ever been more vertically aligned. That's what it takes, make no mistake about it. From the top to the bottom, everyone has to have the same vision, and I feel like we do.

Part of the greatest conference in college athletics, and excited.

We have three great players here today: Tyreem Powell, Mohamed, and Kyle Monangai. When you talk about Mohamed Toure, a tremendous football player and even a more responsible young man. A great leader on our team.

Kyle Monangai burst onto the scene last year, but we knew what we had. As good a performer as he is on the football field, he's even a finer young man.

Tyreem Powell, I remember getting there in late December of 2019, arriving at Rutgers, and he was committed to Virginia Tech, and going into his home and talking with he and his family.

He made a promise at that point that he was going to stay home and go to Rutgers. I made him a promise that we

would prepare and develop him for his ability to reach his goals. To have him here on our team now recovering from surgery and going to be ready to go this fall is huge.

Three great representatives, three New Jersey kids that I'm very, very proud of.

Looking forward to the season. We get started here. Our players arrive on Sunday and away we go. We have a Thursday night start against Howard University, and looking forward to that. Again, we have a long training camp ahead of us and one that we have to stay in the moment.

I talk to our players all the time. There's two great thieves in this world -- the past and the future. We talk about chopping the moment. Chopping right now, being in the present. As their leader, I need to do that.

This is a great entry to preseason camp, and with that, I'll take any questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, obviously in all your years, NFL and Rutgers, what's it been like convincing more of New Jersey kids to stay home, especially the elite New Jersey kids to stay home and build up Rutgers? Secondly, in regards to just your team's identity and their football character, what's easier to kind of fill out and identify for you going into the season?

GREG SCHIANO: First off, recruiting and retaining the best players in our back yard, New Jersey and New York, is critical to our success. It's not just New Jersey or New York players. It's the right New Jersey or New York players.

Quite honestly, I don't put a lot of stock. It's no disrespect to anybody, but the rankings and all that stuff don't mean a heck of a lot to me.

We had a player by the name of Max Melton. When I came to Rutgers in '19, Max was the 22nd rated player in the state of New Jersey. Well, fast-forward four years. He



was the 43rd rated player in the world. He got drafted 43rd in the NFL Draft.

How much those rankings mean, I'm not so sure. I do know this. If you get the right players, the guys that are made of the right stuff, they're a cultural fit and they have the ability. We wouldn't be talking to them if they didn't have the ability.

Once you do, you find those guys that have the ability, the hard part is figuring out are they going to be a cultural fit? Finding them in our back yard is critical. That's something that has been going well. It's hugely critical, but something that I'm excited about.

The second part of your question, who are we as a football team, I think it goes right back to our culture: F.A.M.I.L.Y., Trust, Chop. It doesn't vary. It's not a saying we put on the wall. It's not a shirt. It's how we try to live.

I think it's the greatest tool that I can send a young man into the real world with. F.A.M.I.L.Y., Forget About Me, I Love You. We believe love is sacrifice. The ability to sacrifice for others with no expectation of something in return. You know, not a lot of that going on these days, right? To do that for your teammates and for your coaches, that's special, right?

Trust, 100% honesty and doing what you are supposed to do when you are supposed to do it. Easy to say, hard to do.

Chop, what I mentioned, the ability to stay in the present moment and focus on exactly that which you have to do. Don't let those thieves get you. The past and the future, they get you off your mark. We work really hard in teaching that.

When we say FTC, that's more than something we put on our helmet or something we put on our wristband. It's a way that we try to live life and equip these guys to go out into the real world and be able to be great husbands, great fathers, and productive members of society.

What is our team? It's FTC.

Q. Last season you led Rutgers to its first winning campaign since 2014. However, with the Big Ten expanded with four teams from the West Coast, how do you keep Rutgers from being a needle in a haystack approaching this new season?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, look, I don't try to hide from who we are or what we are. We've been playing football longer than anybody else on the planet.

Yet, we haven't been playing at this level very long. You go back to the mid '80s when we really made the jump to major college football. Relatively young, but it's time. It's time to get going. It's time to make a mark.

As I've talked to our people about, we've been filling the pipeline since we got there with quality young men, quality football players, and I believe now the pipeline is close to being full. Although some of it is young still. We have an experienced group at the end of the pipeline. We're going to have a lot of NFL players that come out of this season.

To me any time we've had great teams at Rutgers, they've been made up of NFL players. I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited about it.

I think that we have the guys that can lead our program. At some point in the last 18 months it went from a coach-led program to a player-led program, and to me that's always been where the program really begins to shift and it begins to get results.

That's what we need to do. We need to stay focused on the moment right here, but certainly looking forward to the season ahead and the new people that are coming into the league. It's just great.

I've always said this. The Big Ten, why do I love the Big Ten Conference? To me it's that sweet spot, that intersection of elite academics with elite football. That's what makes us special. It's still college football. I don't care. You talk about NIL. You talk about revenue share and all those things. It's college football.

They're getting an education, and they're getting it at some of the most elite universities in the country.

Q. Greg, at the NFL scouting combine we talked to a lot of different former Big Ten defensive players. They said that Kyle Monangai was maybe the toughest player they went against in the conference. What characteristics set him apart from other running backs or other players in this league?

GREG SCHIANO: Well, I think what Kyle does best is he has an incredible patience to view, to watch, to wait. But when he makes the decision to go, he is a violent runner.

He's violent the way he plays. He's violent with his feet with his legs. He doesn't stop. The one thing that I love is to watch him run. I would say 98% of the time he's falling forward. He's falling in the right direction.

That's a little bit of who our identity of our football team is.



We're going to get knocked down, but let's make sure we're falling in the right direction and we get up quickly and get back at it.

Q. You guys made a huge jump defensively last year to the top 20 in total defense, and you returned 10 of your 13 starters from the position group. I was wondering if you could tell me what makes this group special and what makes you think they can build upon last year's success and ultimately have a better ranking than they did last year?

GREG SCHIANO: I do love our defense. These guys have been in the program now for four or five years. We're a developmental program. I know people say that. We are truly. That's what we are.

We take guys, and we work really hard over a period of time, and they get to be really good players. That's what I feel we've done now.

Coach Joe Harasymiak, who is our defensive coordinator, has done a phenomenal job since he arrived. I think we have a great chemistry with the coaches and players, not only on the defensive side of the ball, but Coach Ciarrocca on the offensive side of the ball as well.

I as a head coach have not ever been in a position where I feel this comfortable where our two coordinators lead those units. It allows me to do my job as the head coach. I'm very involved in special teams.

Certainly defense is something that I grew up on, but Joe runs the defense, and he does a heck of a job.

Q. You guys have to travel across the country one of the Friday nights this year to play USC. How has your experience in the NFL scheduling cross-country travel prepare you for this new type of Big Ten season?

GREG SCHIANO: That's a great question. I feel fortunate that we had that experience in my time at Tampa. We played the western conferences a couple of times. We played up in Seattle. Those are long trips. Tampa to Seattle is about as long as New Jersey to L.A.

Certainly with the time and all those things, those are details that you work on. You use specialists to help set up your plan. At the end of the day, you have to go out there and you have to block and tackle and throw and catch. You have to play the game of football.

I think sometimes people lose sight. They get all caught up in the semantics of the trips and things. It's still football. That's what our focus will be.

Now, we're incredibly fortunate, again, to have these teams coming into our league to go out and play our first time on the West Coast, play in the Coliseum. I've coached there before. That's a special place. We're looking forward to that.

Q. About ten years ago you built Rutgers into a huge powerhouse in the Big East Conference, and now you're here in the Big Ten trying to do the same thing. Can you talk about the way things are similar to building back then but they're different now?

GREG SCHIANO: I think college football is so different now with the changes that have happened even in the last -- I heard one of the coaches down in the SEC said college football has changed just about every six months since he took the job. It was Billy down at Florida.

I'll tell you what, he's right. It's changed very often lately. The ability to adapt, to pivot, to make changes is critical as a college football coach.

For a long time it was very, very similar, and then it made a big move. The Big East was an eight-team league, and it was a good league. There was some really good football being played. We're talking about Big Ten, the best college football conference in the country. To be a member of that, like I said earlier, it's a blessing, it really is, to be a member of this league.

Look forward to continuing to build to get to a point where we are in the mix for the championship. That's what we're building for.

I didn't come out of retirement to go to a bowl game. I came out of retirement to win a championship at Rutgers. Hopefully we'll do that.

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