

“We Need To Hang Tough:” Greg Schiano Talks Ohio State-Rutgers



This won't be the first return trip to Ohio Stadium for Rutgers head coach and former Ohio State defensive coordinator Greg Schiano, but it is perhaps the best Scarlet Knight squad to play at the Buckeyes in recent years.

Rutgers got off to a 3-0 start the season – the second consecutive year with an unblemished nonconference schedule – before falling to Iowa in Week Four, but it still appears to so far be the most competitive Scarlet Knight team in Schiano's third season.

“He's an excellent motivator, creates great relationships with his players,” Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said Tuesday. “Really can drive his whole program at a high level. I think he's an excellent leader.”

The Scarlet Knights have yet to beat Ohio State in eight tries, and Schiano said this week that he understands the challenge of playing the Buckeyes.

“If you play poorly against a team like Ohio State, it really gets exposed, right?” Schiano said. “We need to go out and play our best game and then some things go your way and again, the game is what you need to do.

“You need to hang in there,” he continued, “you need to play tough, and you keep looking up and there's still a chance and then you keep going and it gets tighter and tighter, and that's what you go in when you're a market under dog and that's where we are right now.”

The Scarlet Knights have shown promise so far on defense this season, allowing just 17.3 points and 56.5 rushing yards per game, while the Buckeyes are rushing for 219.8 yards per game.

Rutgers' offense has more questions, however, with an unsettled quarterback situation, but this contest will offer a measuring stick for the Scarlet Knights as they continue their rebuild under Schiano.

“Overall, the tide is definitely rising and we are going out to Columbus to play our very best game since we've been back and see where that puts us,” he said.

Schiano was also complementary of Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud, who has thrown for five passing touchdowns in consecutive games. At Rutgers last season, Stroud was 17-of-23 passing for 330 yards and five touchdowns, and Schiano said he has only seen further improvement.

“Yeah, he’s been through a lot more football games and seen a lot more defenses, including his own,” Schiano said. “What he’s going against now is some high-level stuff. When you go against that every day in practice, iron sharpens iron a little bit there. Yeah, he’s an elite level quarterback for sure.”