

SCARLET SPORTS

PREVIEWS AND RECAPS OF VARSITY, CLUB, AND INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS



Double the Trouble

For Scarlet Knights quarterback Tom Savage and wide receiver Mohamed Sanu, team is family. That's what head football coach Greg Schiano preaches, and that's the way they see it, too. You could say Savage (right) and Sanu are like brothers, a relationship forged during the twilight of their high school careers when they were top recruits and among the first in the 2009 recruiting class to say yes to Rutgers. At 6-5 and 230 pounds, Savage was so coveted that, after committing to Rutgers as a junior at ▶▶▶

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN EMERSON

Double the Trouble

▶ Cardinal O'Hara High School in Springfield, Pennsylvania, he raised a black flag embossed with a scarlet "R" over the family home, signaling to recruiting interlopers that the chase was over. Rutgers recruiting coordinator Joe Susan went to South Brunswick High School to evaluate one player but got a glimpse of Sanu as a freshman and was stunned by his athleticism. As an option quarterback, wide receiver, safety, and punter, he later led his high school team to its first playoff game in 30 years.

Savage and Sanu, half expecting to be shelved as redshirt freshmen, certainly didn't count on playing big parts on a Scarlet Knights team that went 9–4 and beat Central Florida, 45–24, in the St. Petersburg Bowl. Savage, having one of the strongest arms in the nation, was summoned from the bench to start the second half of the opening game against Cincinnati, and Schiano never saw a reason to sit him back

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down. In 12 games, he passed for 2,211 yards and 14 touchdowns and threw only seven interceptions. In the St. Petersburg Bowl, Savage threw for 294 yards, a career best.

At 6-2 and 215 pounds, Sanu displayed dependable hands and

nimble feet all season (he broke the Middlesex County triple-jump record in high school), catching 51 passes for 639 yards and running 62 times for 346 yards. Most of the latter came after swapping spots with Savage in the backfield to take snaps out of the Wildcat formation, a confusing configuration for defenses because of the odd alignment of the offensive line and the deployment of the quarterback as a running back. In the 34–14 road win over Louisville, Sanu handled the ball 22 times in running for 148 yards. In the bowl game, he had 13 touches from the Wildcat, leading to two rushing touchdowns. Not bad for a wide receiver.

These guys, who want to play in the NFL, will be teammates for another three years, touchstones of one of the youngest Rutgers teams that Schiano has assembled in his 10 years as head coach, with 62 players having at least three years of eligibility. Rutgers fans are hoping that the chorus of Savage and Sanu's favorite dressing room song, "The Winner" by Drake, which they listen to sitting side-by-side as they get psyched for games, is prophetic: *"I'm doin' it big. Look at what I done. Look at where I'm is. It's only just begun."*



A VERY PROFESSIONAL SETTING

As he enters his 10th year coaching the Scarlet Knights, Greg Schiano has his team playing like the pros.

As a defensive backfield coach for the NFL's Chicago Bears, Greg Schiano witnessed firsthand the intensity and sophistication of the professional game. When he returned to college football in 1999, first as the defensive coordinator at the University of Miami and later as head coach of Rutgers, he implemented much of what he had seen. By the time of the Scarlet Knights' home opener on September 2 against Norfolk State University, more than 30 of his former players were on the rosters of NFL teams, including 15 since 2007—as many as any Big East team and rivaling the output of schools such as Penn State University. It is no coincidence.

At Miami, Schiano built the Hurricanes into an imposing defense, which relied on speed, finesse, and smarts, and which led the team to a 25–5 record



in two seasons and a Sugar Bowl victory in 2000. Perhaps most remarkable, he got his players prepared in probably half the time that his former professional players devoted to the game, on and off the field. By the time he became the 27th head coach of the Scarlet Knights, he had perfected a short-hand method for instilling his college athletes with the techniques and physical and mental toughness associated with NFL athletes. From devising crafty defensive and offensive alignments, to running disciplined practices, to overseeing off-the-field training for both body and mind, Schiano has his program modeling NFL regimens. Most important to him, Schiano wanted his players to excel as young men and in the classroom. In May, the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate report recognized Rutgers as the top football program in the nation for achieving superior eligibility, retention, and graduation rates.

Now in his 10th season as head coach, Schiano, the self-appointed father figure who surrounds himself

with assistant coaches who fill surrogate roles of uncles, understands that he is working with impressionable young men who are undergoing the biggest physical and emotional changes of their lives, second only, he says, to the development associated with early childhood. He knows that off-field challenges often rival those on the field, each affecting the other.

"There are so many choices today for these kids that I never had to deal with," says Schiano. "The information age has changed what it means to be a young adult. Part of the maturation process is helping student-athletes resist temptations and distractions. What we've been able to create is peer pressure to do the right thing. What we say around here is, 'You reap what you sow.'"

Schiano's "live-in-the-moment" philosophy emphasizes moving on from mistakes and going all out on every play during practice, where the real work of a successful season takes place. Staff members videotape all 90 practices that occur during the 12-game regular season and teach players how to evaluate the footage, something that, Schiano says, "very few incoming high school players

Prime-Time Players

Rutgers Players in NFL Camps This Summer

Gary Brackett (1999–02) Indianapolis Colts, Linebacker	Devin McCourty (2005–09) New England Patriots, Cornerback
Kenny Britt (2006–08) Tennessee Titans, Wide Receiver	Jason McCourty (2005–08) Tennessee Titans, Cornerback
Kevin Brock (2005–08) Dallas Cowboys, Tight End	Ryan Neill (2001–05) St. Louis Rams, Defensive End
Tim Brown (2006–09) New York Giants, Wide Receiver	Shaun O'Hara (1997–99) New York Giants, Center
Jack Corcoran (2006–09) Houston Texans, Running Back	J'Vonne Parker (2004) Denver Broncos, Defensive Tackle
Anthony Davis (2007–09) San Francisco 49ers, Offensive Tackle	Joe Porter (2003–06) Oakland Raiders, Cornerback
Ryan D'Imperio (2006–09) Minnesota Vikings, Linebacker	Brandon Renkert (2003–07) Indianapolis Colts, Linebacker
Eric Foster (2003–07) Indianapolis Colts, Defensive End	Ray Rice (2005–07) Baltimore Ravens, Running Back
Gary Gibson (2001–04) St. Louis Rams, Defensive Tackle	Derrick Roberson (2003–06) Tampa Bay Bucs, Cornerback
Courtney Greene (2005–08) Jacksonville Jaguars, Safety	L.J. Smith (1999–02) Baltimore Ravens, Tight End
Clark Harris (2003–06) Cincinnati Bengals, Tight End	Darnell Stapleton (2005–06) Pittsburgh Steelers, Guard
Kevin Haslam (2005–09) Jacksonville Jaguars, Offensive Tackle	Cameron Stephenson (2003–06) Jacksonville Jaguars, Guard
George Johnson (2006–09) Tampa Bay Bucs, Defensive End	Mike Teel (2005–08) Chicago Bears, Quarterback
Nate Jones (2000–03) Denver Broncos, Safety	Tiquan Underwood (2005–08) Jacksonville Jaguars, Wide Receiver
Brian Leonard (2002–06) Cincinnati Bengals, Running Back	Jamaal Westerman (2004–08) New York Jets, Linebacker
Kevin Malast (2005–08) Chicago Bears, Linebacker	Jeremy Zuttah (2004–07) Tampa Bay Bucs, Guard

understand." His time in the NFL taught him that in a sport where many of the players are so similar in athleticism, the difference between success and failure lies in mental preparation. That, and arduous physical training, for which Schiano credits Jay Butler, his top strength and conditioning coach, explains why so many players are drafted into the NFL—and why many players sign as free agents.

Despite having so many of his former players scattered around the country, Schiano manages to stay in touch with them. But nothing beats running into his pro players in the weight room at the Hale Center adjacent to Rutgers Stadium, where most of them return to work out and train during the off-season—and inspire the next generation of student-athletes who have dreams of the NFL.

For a full-length interview with coach Greg Schiano, visit magazine.rutgers.edu.

Singin' in the Lane

The women's basketball team is counting on Chelsey Lee, and her tough inside game, to return the Scarlet Knights to the top.

● With no seniors in her midst for the new season, head coach C. Vivian Stringer is looking to Chelsey Lee to lead the Scarlet Knights women's basketball team, now that the 6-2 junior has developed into one of the top forwards in the Big East. A rebounding stalwart on both ends of the floor, Lee can score—and cause problems in the paint for opponents. She was the bright spot during the 2009–10 season, when the team went 19–15 before losing to number-eight seed University of Iowa in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

Lee's competitiveness, work ethic, and athleticism grabbed Stringer's attention when the coach was courting another recruit, forward April Sykes, at an AAU game in Lee's home state of Florida. As a first-year student, Lee averaged seven minutes of playing time, which last year jumped to more than 27 minutes. She also led the team in rebounds with 238—85 more than anybody else on the team. This year, Stringer is expecting Lee to step out of the lane, bury some key jump shots, and improve her passing when she is posted up, even if she is double-teamed. Stringer concedes that the charismatic Lee is unlikely to improve in one respect: her singing, off-key reveries that make the coach and teammates wince and laugh—but Lee wins votes for her self-possession. She has a much better chance, Coach Stringer will tell you, of developing into a WNBA draft choice than she does becoming the next Beyoncé.



When Talk Is Cheap

It's been nearly 20 years since the Scarlet Knights men's basketball team made the NCAA tournament. Head coach Mike Rice intends to change that.

In college basketball, success is measured by NCAA tournament appearances, and Rutgers hasn't made one since 1991—a bitter fact not lost on Mike Rice, the new coach for the Scarlet Knights men's basketball team. "Before I got here, Rutgers was, I thought, a sleeping giant," he says. "With its academics, history and tradition, and proximity to high school talent, Rutgers always seemed capable of developing a program that could rank with the other Big East Conference powerhouses."

Why it hasn't happened isn't Rice's concern. But he understands fan frustration and realizes that success can't come soon enough. Rice, the fifth head coach since 1991, expects the Scarlet Knights to compete for a Big East Conference championship and qualify for the NCAA tournament. "I'm very confident we will get it done, but words are just words," he says. "The fans have heard it all before."

Honesty and passion have made a success of Rice. As the head coach of Robert Morris University for three seasons, he compiled a 73–31 record, secured back-to-back NCAA tournament berths, and saw every player graduate. As an assistant coach at the University of Pittsburgh, Saint Joseph's University, and Marquette University, among other schools, he was successful recruiting players, helping to coach practices, and devising game strategies.

What sets him apart from his colleagues, he says, is "the four years I spent away from the rat race of college athletics," when Rice ran clinics and camps for a basketball event-management company from 2001 to 2004. "I got to know high school and AAU coaches as people rather than as someone calling just to get a recruiting edge. It helped me immeasurably as a coach and as a person."

Phil Martelli, head coach at Saint Joseph's, lured him back. "I missed it," says Rice, whose parents met at Duquesne University, where they played basketball. His father became head coach at Youngstown State University and Duquesne, and Rice grew up tagging along with him on trips to playgrounds and high school gyms to watch players. A star point guard at Boardman High School in Ohio, Rice was a three-year starter at Fordham University, where, as team captain during his senior year in 1990–91, the team went 25–8.



The way he sees it, a successful head coach needs to wear many hats. "You need to put together a great staff and love talking to 15- to 19-year-old kids," says Rice. "You can't be afraid to make players uncomfortable, whether that means conditioning, getting in their ear about effort or selflessness, or showing it to them on video. There will be no game I will go into expecting to lose. We will improve every single day. No one will outwork us; I guarantee that. But, like I said, words are just words."

For a Q&A with Coach Rice, visit magazine.rutgers.edu.