

# College World Series: Lexington Regional

Sunday, June 4, 2023  
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

**Indiana Hoosiers**

**Coach Jeff Mercer**

**Phillip Glasser**

Postgame Press Conference



Kentucky - 16, Indiana - 6

COACH MERCER: Obviously every game is important. Sometimes games go sideways. Today was one of those games. You just pick up and move on. You've got two to win one and go back and play tomorrow. Just gotta move on.

**Q. You guys have talked all year about it being a player-led team. What's your message to the guys in the locker room?**

PHILLIP GLASSER: The message is it might hurt tonight but tomorrow we've got a game. We have an opportunity to win a Regional and that's why we came here. I know our guys, we've done it all year, to regroup and refocus and focus, go on to tomorrow.

**Q. Are you guys -- I know you don't feel like you're playing with house money, obviously, because you want to win the Regional. In some ways you've achieved everything and more than many would think outside of the locker room, probably, you're in a Regional championship tomorrow night in a winner-take-all. Do you feel this season is a success regardless? And how nice is it you're playing this late in the season for your season for the first time all the way in the Regional championship and not early where your season ended?**

PHILLIP GLASSER: The only voices we listen to are the ones inside the locker room. This team believes we can go as far as we want to. So I wouldn't say so far right now it's a success. I think it's just we have a game tomorrow, we've got to go out and win it.

**Q. (Indiscernible) beaten by double-digit runs, so it's not anything you haven't done before. How do you put yourself and the team into that mindset of just that**

**kind of bounce-back mode and kind of ignore the momentum of what Kentucky built today?**

PHILLIP GLASSER: Yeah, I mean, that's why baseball is an incredible sport because you've got a game tomorrow. It's not like football where it's once a week. So as you said, we've been in that position before. And a lot of times we've bounced back. So mentally our guys will be ready for tomorrow.

**Q. You were playing right beside Evan Goforth making his first start in a while (indiscernible) and pretty good game today offensively and defensively. What was that like?**

PHILLIP GLASSER: I was super proud of Evan. He works every day throughout the whole season. We knew once Cerny was out that he was going to step in and do his job because of the work he's been putting in. I'm super proud of him.

**Q. You had a lot of hit batters today. That was a big problem last year. It's come way down this year. For this Regional it seemed to returned. Is there something different in the pitching that caused you to hit more batters?**

COACH MERCER: Not necessarily. They did a good job. They were on the plate today. It was obviously a part of their plan, which is fine. That's what teams do. You make an adjustment and you (indiscernible) on play a little bit. We lost some balls, too.

We threw some guys today that haven't thrown a ton. Those things happen. It's not a deal. It's not an issue. We threw some guys today that haven't thrown a ton. And some of them haven't been leaned on in, like, premium innings on weekends and whatnot. Sometimes those things happen. You just pick up and move on.

**Q. In the seventh inning when Adrian hit Church, you went out to the umpire, had a conversation there. What kind of was going on there?**

COACH MERCER: Both teams got a warning. So we



obviously, I think we hit six guys. So it was a trend, not a one-off. It wasn't because the guy hit a home run. I don't know.

They were upset that he got hit. We didn't want to hit him. I wouldn't want to get hit. I would be tired of getting hit too. They were saying some stuff. Pete is going to stick up for the guy. Pete says something back. Then they give both teams a warning.

He's trying to do his job. The umpire is trying to do his job. He's trying to keep everybody de-escalated. It's heated. It's a big moment. Guys are frustrated. They're tired of getting hit in the back. I'm tired of watching them get hit in the back. I'm sure it was a little bit of both.

And both teams got a warning. We weren't throwing at them. Kids were chirping. They chirp back and forth, and that happens. So I understand.

**Q. Tensions seem to have been running high the last two games between you guys and Kentucky, altercations after the games between coaches. How do you calm the players and coaches, everybody around, for tomorrow's game knowing you have to play them a third time through this?**

COACH MERCER: We just have to have a conversation about it. And we have to understand that there's a lot of things behind the scenes. There's a lot of things going on. There's a lot of moving pieces. I don't want to get into it. But there's just a lot.

We just have to have a discussion about keeping it on the field and being professionals. And we've done a really good job of that this year. We've been professionals and we've been gentlemen. And that's something that's really important to me and I'm very proud of that.

And we need to continue to be that. We need to continue to represent Indiana the correct way. Represent the department, the program with class and dignity, and make sure we continue that. We have all year and we will continue to do that. So we just have to have a discussion and make sure we stay where we've always been.

**Q. Is there anything to be said for the fact that this wasn't a game decided by a walk-off home run or anything? Does it make it easier to wash it away in that sense, to kind of wash it off? And also where are you at pitching wise tomorrow?**

COACH MERCER: So the reality is this: When Luke Sinnard got hurt, we essentially had to use three starters to get to the first game. But if you don't win the first game you

don't get here. And so you have a decision to make at that point. You try to win that game, which you have to.

And then realizing at some point the loss of innings is going to catch back up. And so now we're in a position today where, if I bring all those guys back, you talk about Kraft and Bothwell and Foley. If I bring those guys back today, one, we're increasing risk of injury which you can't do. The guys don't deserve that.

The second thing is you're risking them one injury, but two, not being nearly good enough to be able to win the game.

So you're going to have to rely on somebody else to cover the loss of those innings. And so when you draw it up, you give yourself a chance to run through it once -- and Ben's done that before where he's given us a chance to run through the lineup once -- and you read where the game is at make a decision from there.

We have two games to win one. The worst thing I can do is run out and bring guys back on too short of rest and their stuff is not good or they get hurt. If we have a chance we run through it once and they'll obviously have to throw their arms because if they lose they're done. So they have to go their prime arms first.

We read the game, decide where it goes. And then if we don't have a window, then we push to tomorrow and we go and try to win the Regional.

And that's the way the game's played. You have to be able to, if you get into a position where you have to take it on the chin, you have to take it on the chin, because as a coach your job is to give your team and the boys the best opportunity to win their Regional.

That's my job. And so you know what, we did that today. And so we have to go out tomorrow and now those guys are going to have as much rest as they possibly can and have a chance to win that game.

And that's what I told our team, that's what I'll tell you now. I've always been open and honest and always very forthcoming. And that's the reality. So the guys that have thrown the majority of the innings for the year, they've been taxed this weekend early. And today we couldn't do that today to them.

Now we'll line up tomorrow see if we can make a run at it go win it. The guys that threw today they competed for the most part. It didn't go their way. Some of those guys haven't thrown in a while. But they did their job and we'll push through it.

**Q. You mentioned yesterday this is a relatively new position for your team to be in, playing for a Regional championship. How did you feel about the emotions of your team heading into this game?**

COACH MERCER: I thought we were in a good spot. I still think we're in a good spot. The great thing about baseball, as Phil alluded to, it's an everyday sport. It's an everyday game. Sometimes you're on top of the hill. Sometimes you're on the bottom of the hill.

You just -- you can't ride the waves. You're not the best team in the world when you win or you're not the worst team when you lose, even when you get your butt kicked.

We've been through the battles and things. And the team is in a fine spot. I talked to them afterwards. They're great. They understand. They'll move on and let's go play tomorrow.

By the time -- if you've been good enough, if you won enough games to get to this point in the season, then you've had to persevere through obstacles throughout the course of the year.

We'll be ready to play tomorrow. Win or lose, we'll be ready to play. And you go out and you do the best you can. So I don't worry about their mindset or mentality or anything like that.

**Q. I imagine at some point in your career you've been in that scenario that UK was in today, having to play (indiscernible) innings. It's viewed as a tough spot to be in. Any advantages that can be -- going out there and getting the cuts (indiscernible)?**

COACH MERCER: Sure, you hit the nail on the head there. Especially as a hitting guy. As an offensive guy, as a hitting guy, you go out and all of a sudden you kind of get your legs underneath you a little bit. You get your swings going.

And the team you're playing you're in that third or fourth game. So now their pitching has been utilized, so now maybe all of a sudden you get a fastball you haven't gotten all weekend and you get a homer, hit it off the wall. Get your confidence going, feeling good.

And you go into the next game carrying it forward. I would say absolutely you can slice it both ways. You can say you played 18 innings and we're worn down, or you can say played 18 innings and, man, got a bunch of good swings in and we feel good going into it.

Life is about your perspective, typically, and so have your

slice -- I'm sure they sliced it with a -- Kentucky won 10-0 the first game? Hey, man, we're cooking, we scored 10 runs, we got it all, got the bats rolling, whatever it is. And they mixed them up and did all that stuff, and we're ready to go into this game. I'm sure they took that mentality and were ready to play.

**Q. You scored two runs in the bottom of the ninth. Do you think that will benefit you moving into tomorrow, ending the game on a lighter note?**

COACH MERCER: Sure. You ask your guys to continue to compete. I know that's a hard thing to always do. You're frustrated and I just told the guys you just have to keep playing, just keep playing, keep competing. You don't get to mail it in or you don't get to wear "Indiana" across your chest or cash in your chips because you're frustrated or the score is out of hand.

That's the standard and that's the expectation. That's how it's always been. That's how it's always going to be. And you just go play.

My feelings don't matter. My feelings don't matter. We don't have the luxury of having feelings when you're playing at this level. You have to get over it and you have to move on and just go compete. It's life. It's life.

People get up and go to work every day. You have to get up and go to work whether you are sick, whether you feel good, whether you don't, whether you make a bunch of money or no money. You have to keep going back to work, and the ninth inning is your job. And you go play at the best of your abilities.

**Q. How much do you think your pitching staff can benefit from the situation like this where you're playing Kentucky two days in a row you get them tomorrow and maybe you learn some of their tendencies, et cetera?**

COACH MERCER: A ton, especially for your pitching coach. He's going to be calling 70, 80 percent of those pitches -- catchers, Pete is a really smart catcher, he's really good at helping us facilitate and manage the game and pitch calling and whatnot.

That stuff helps a ton. And then having, you can look at it two ways, the pitchers probably throw tomorrow, most of the guys have thrown. And now you look at it, you say these guys have seen, these guys before.

And on the other hand that's a good thing for the pitcher to know some weaknesses and tendencies, and also can be a good thing for the hitter now that I've seen the guy

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

before, too.

It can go both ways but definitely the more information you can have, if you can execute pitches the better off it is for the staff, yes.

**Q. Last week in Big Ten tournament you had some defensive issues where some tough throws were made that really went bad. Looks like they were doing a better job keeping it in the pocket in tough situations it wasn't intentional?**

COACH MERCER: We talked about that quite a bit this past week and ran through those scenarios. And we got a chance to practice and run through those. I talked about it a ton. I said listen I know the mistakes we've made were in earnest, we're trying to do the best we can, we're trying to make a play.

Sometimes the ball bounces -- the chopper to Josh Pyne today where it's a high bouncer. There's no play. Don't force a throw now they throw up the line. We did. Just force somebody to hit, force somebody to not hit into a double play. We have first and second, nobody out in the first inning. Get a double play ball and a soft line to center, you're out of the inning.

Those things -- keep the double play in order and force them to go station to station as much as possible.

We went through that stuff a ton. And mental fatigue leads to physical fatigue, or vice versa, however you want to cut it up. Sometimes you don't make good decisions. We made errors but we didn't kick routine plays. We weren't dropping fly balls or missing reaching ground balls, to your point.

We weren't making good decisions in those balls those plays where if it's a 50/50 play, go make that play. Get to 90-10 in a different direction, if you have to make a Brooks Robinson play or you have to make some impossible play to get an out, then put it in our pocket and move on to the next one and trust our guy to get a weak contact and get out of it.

But we spent a lot of time working on it. And the guys have done a good job at it. Done a good job.

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