

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Florida Gators

### Kevin O'Sullivan

#### Postgame Press Conference



Florida 4, Kentucky 1

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you could just open it up with a statement, and then we'll have questions for you.

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I thought Tommy pitched well today certainly in some difficult spots. He made some big pitches when he needed to, and I thought Trey came in and did a really nice job. He kind of settled into that setup role. And then Jack Mason pitches at the end like, you know, he's been doing.

Offensively, I think we were pretty fortunate. We scored four runs on five hits. Jacob went in the first pitch of the ball game and kind of got us jump-started. Sterling had a two-out base hit the other way and kind of finished out the inning on a positive note. I thought Cory Acton had a nice day offensively as well.

It was a game where we were probably a little bit fortunate to win, but we certainly made some pitches when we needed to.

**Q. It seemed like the decision to start Tommy on short rest, there was a different sense of urgency today with being a single elimination game?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Sure. I think I got asked on the air when we did the interview in the fourth about what our approach was, and it's a really simple answer. Our approach was to try to do everything we needed to do to win the day so we'd have an opportunity to get into the tournament starting tomorrow.

**Q. You talked about a few months ago you challenged the pitchers to be more competitive. Have you really seen Tommy step into that and show that kind of edge probably over his last four or five starts?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, you're watching the same

thing I'm watching. He's certainly responded in a positive way and given our team a lift, and he's taken over that number one starter's role. We had some weeks there where I thought our pitching was a little bit out of sorts in terms of Franco being the Friday starter because we had some short weeks.

I think we've got it in a spot now where Tommy's established himself as our No. 1 pitcher, and Hunter's earned it as well. He's earned the right to pitch in the middle of a weekend. And Franco, what he did last week against Arkansas, he's starting to come into his own.

It just took a while. We talked about that, about this has just been a different year in terms of knowing your personnel and trying to put all the pieces in the right spot. And usually we take the first four weekends and try to move things around to see, which we have before SEC play starts, but it took us probably an extra four weeks or so to really start to see or put the pieces in the right spot.

I'm certainly pleased on where we're at. Obviously, today was an important win for us because now we get a chance to get both Hunter and Franco out onto the mound before we start regional play next weekend.

**Q. Going into double elimination now, do you go Barco tomorrow or try to set things up better for the regional? What's the plan with the starters?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: We'll try to keep things simple. Hunter will go tomorrow, and Franco will go Thursday, and we'll see where we are after that.

**Q. How important was it to get that first run after Tommy battled back in the top of the first like that?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: It was really important. Obviously, we're coming off a really tough week at Arkansas. Obviously, Arkansas played great. There was a reason they won all ten series this year and put themselves in position to win the SEC Championship. Going into the weekend, we had an opportunity to potentially win the league. Obviously, Arkansas played better than us in all phases and ended up winning the SEC, and we ended up



finishing sixth place.

That goes to show you how difficult this league is and how competitive it is, seven, eight teams deep. To come back today -- and it's been some travel, and we got in here Sunday night -- but it was an important win for us. Obviously, coming off the three games that we lost at Arkansas, this time of the year, postseason's got a different feel to it. Bottom line is we found a way to win today.

**Q. I believe Trey threw 40-some-odd pitches today. Is he available tomorrow, or are we more likely to see him Thursday or Friday?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Probably not, to be honest with you. The reason we extended him a little bit today because, if Hunter does what he's supposed to do, if we do go to the pen at some point, we'll probably go right-handed. So we will definitely need to get some more help from some of these other left-handers to maybe get an out or two. But I don't think, with us starting Hunter tomorrow, like I said, it would probably come down to more right-handed in the second half of the ball game.

**Q. With Mac Guscette back behind the plate tonight, how did you think he looked specifically while catching?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I thought he did great. We're going to need to get him going. We've got some other players too. We need to figure out a way to get Colby Halter going again. We've got some decisions to make, but certainly we've been waiting for Mac to feel like he's been 100 percent. He was probably 100 percent probably a week or two ago, but we've been extra cautious with him to be sure that, when we get into the postseason, he'll be ready to go.

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