

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Alabama Crimson Tide

## Brad Bohannon

### Postgame Press Conference



to throw 80 or 90 pitches, good or bad, and he's never one time wanted to come out of the game. He gave us great effort today, like he's done all year, and we're proud of him.

**Q. Just wanted to ask you about Dio. I know he was in a big slump before that at bat in the third. How big is that RBI to continue the inning and put up a six spot in the third. Where is his confidence after that at bat?**

BRAD BOHANNON: It was huge for Dio. Dio is a really talented player and had a short season last year and a good pre-SEC season this year. His last 50 at bats or so have been tough. No matter how talented you are, or if you were here last year and you played four weeks of non-league play, you just can't simulate the Southeastern Conference.

We had seven freshmen or COVID freshmen in the lineup today, and Dio had a rough patch. He's typically not a swing and miss guy for a guy that hits for power, and he's been striking out a bunch. Then you start doubting yourself and pressing and making changes. I tried to give him a break here and there. Sometimes mentally, when it's not going well, just taking a step back and watching for a day can help, and we've done that a couple of times.

He's pretty good left on left, so when they went to the pin and brought in the lefty, I think in some ways mentally it helps him think about not trying to do too much and just stay on the ball, and that's exactly what he did.

**Q. You talked a little bit about in your opening statement this being a complete win, and you really did do well defensively, offensively, and on the base pads. What does that mean to get that kind of effort from a team that is so young and had no experience in the SEC Tournament?**

BRAD BOHANNON: That's how you win this time of year. You'd better play a complete game. That's what Mississippi State did to us for three straight days last weekend. You've got to pound the strike zone. Make the other team earn every 90 feet that they get. You can do all that and still lose. Sometimes you've got to make a big pitch or get a big hit.

Alabama 9, South Carolina 3

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Coach Brad Bohannon. Coach, before we take questions, could you give us your general thoughts on the game today.

BRAD BOHANNON: Yeah, really good game for us all the way around. Obviously, a big game and a big win. Quite certain our season would have been over if we'd lost today.

The kids were excited. We had a really spirited workout yesterday. I'm not surprised at all that our kids brought their best effort. We pitched well. Tyler Ras gave us just a huge start of good innings and also going deep in the game on a little short rest, and Brock Guffey did a great job for three innings of putting up zeros and helping us save our bullpen.

Made a couple of diving plays, clean defense, and some production up and down the lineup. So just a really complete game for us and really happy for the kids and proud of them and excited that we get to play at least two more days.

**Q. Quick question. Looks like Tyler was right to request the start today. What does that say about his confidence in himself and also your confidence in him, and what does his big win today kind of bring to the team moving forward?**

BRAD BOHANNON: Ras is from New Jersey. He's never lacked confidence. He's been a rock for us and made it really easy for us to not move him off of that Friday night spot or the first game of the series. Just real proud of him. I think our kids maybe compete a little bit harder behind him because they kind of feed off of his mojo, his confidence. Just happy for him and proud of him.

All these young pitchers, they want to be starting pitchers. If you're going to do that on Friday or Saturday, you've got



That's what we did today. We played clean, didn't give them much. They helped us a bit, gave us some base runners, and today we got a couple of big hits with people on base. That's how you beat top 25 teams. That's all you're going to see the rest of the way out.

**Q. Coach, how crucial was it to get into South Carolina's bullpen early on, especially with that lead?**

BRAD BOHANNON: It's big. Everybody played Thursday, Friday, Saturday last week, and some guys are bouncing guys back, and some aren't. South Carolina elected to not go with any of their three weekend starters, which means that they're planning on throwing multiple guys out of the pen. So the earlier you can get in the pen, then maybe you can have a guy get extended or maybe they tried to sneak one in they really didn't want to pitch. You know, that 6 spot in the third inning was huge. It's really the story of the game. You take that out, it was an even game the rest of the way. I think we both had a 2 and a 1 after that.

That was the story of the game, getting in the pen and putting up the big crooked number there.

**Q. One crucial factor from today's game was the fact you didn't have to go to the bullpen early. That's going to help you out the next couple days. What was the effect of Tyler not leaving early, pitching deep, and how does that relieve some of the stress of the bullpen coming in the next couple days?**

BRAD BOHANNON: It's the only way to stick around here for a while. I don't know if a team that's ever played on Tuesday has ever won the tournament. I could be off, but I think to do it, you need to win the first three and then get a day off going into the weekend.

It was huge. We pitched a lot of guys on Saturday and Sunday this past week -- excuse me -- Friday and Saturday this past week. And just a lot of those guys getting an extra day is big this time of year, and especially the guys like Will Freeman that have pitched twice a week and Chase Lee are the guys I'm thinking about.

You go in tomorrow against a legit top five team in Tennessee that won the East, a great team. I don't know what we'll do to start the game, but you do know you get Freeman and Landon Green and Chase Lee, among others. Really everybody is available except for Ras and Brock Guffey. Really that's the only way to compete for the next two days.

**Q. I want to ask about the Tennessee matchup. That was a series early in the year when you guys took one,**

**and one game went to extras and the finale with a one-run game. What are your thoughts on then? Is there confidence in your club knowing that you guys can compete with the Eastern Division champions?**

BRAD BOHANNON: Our kids are really always confident. That doesn't mean you always win. There's some areas of the game that we need to be better, and maybe we're a little short. I think our kids really compete and think that they're going to win every time they come to the ballpark.

My coaching staff makes fun of me because like almost every day, I'm like, no, I think we're going to smoke them today. That's just my demeanor and hopefully rubs off on our kids. It's just more fun to live your life that way.

And I do believe in our group. Tennessee is a great team. You win your division in this league, you are legit. It's probably good for our kids that we played them three times and beat them once. I think we lost in extra innings. We lost a one-run game. It feels like a long time ago. I know our kids will come out swinging. They won't back down.

Tremendous respect for what Tony has done with that team. I think they play -- they play like they're the SEC East champs. They really believe in themselves, and I really respect the aura that they play with. They're going to get our best punch, and I know we'll get theirs. Should be a fun day.

**Q. As you guys play here in Hoover, how have you seen Peyton Wilson kind of take a little bit of a leadership role? Being the only guy with any experience being around here.**

BRAD BOHANNON: Yeah, it's pretty cool that Peyton and Brock Guffey, we have two guys that played at Hoover High School that live within a bike ride of the ballpark. So I don't think we've got to worry about the bus getting lost. We can grab those guys and bring them up to the front.

Peyton is a leader for our club in just the way he plays. He's just such an aggressive kid. A lot of the sabermetrics would tell me I should hit him in a different spot in the order, maybe the 2 hole, because of his OPS, but I love the way he sets the tone for our offense. Like I want that dude leading off. He's so aggressive, and I want him getting every extra at bat that he might get over the course of the year.

I think our other young players see that. You see a guy that's having a lot of success, and he's just really confident and ultra-aggressive. They're like, hey, maybe I should play the game that way. He has a really positive influence on the club in a lot of ways. I thought it was awesome that

he got three hits today, and Brock Guffey got to pitch three innings, just being local guys.

I swear this is the truth. After coaching third in the middle of the game, down on right field on the hill, I see a bunch of little kids, and I was like, you know, one of those guys is probably going to play shortstop for me in 2032, or one of those guys will probably catch for me in 2029 or something. A bunch of these guys have been to these games, and I'm just really happy for them that they had a good day here today.

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