

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

South Carolina Gamecocks

Mark Kingston

Postgame Press Conference



Alabama 9, South Carolina 3

THE MODERATOR: South Carolina head coach Mark Kingston is next. Open it up with a statement, and we'll have questions for you.

MARK KINGSTON: Congratulations to Alabama. They played a great ball game. Obviously, we let it go early. The difference in the ball game was that third inning. Needed to do a better job of stopping the bleeding once that starts and helping our opponent in those situations.

I thought Lloyd and Bosnic did a great job coming in, and basically the last six innings of that game, really shut them down, but at that point, it was too little, too late.

Q. What did you see get away from C.J. in that third inning, and what did you see from Gilreath? Obviously pitched pretty well of late but gave up that big home run.

MARK KINGSTON: The problem for C.J. was he just stopped throwing strikes and the command just left him. The stuff is unmistakable, but at that point, his command completely left him. He'll learn from it. He's a good pitcher. He had done really well for us of late. He just has to continue to learn how to command the baseball and throw strikes. He still only gave up one hit today. He's extremely hard to hit, but he's got to get to the point as a pitcher where he's not going to give those free passes like he did today.

And then John, John was really good his last outing, and today he just threw some balls in the middle of the plate. His stuff is not like most of our guys where he can get away with mistakes in the middle of the plate. He needs to pitch on the corners. He needs to command the ball and get ahead, and he just didn't do that today. He'll be better next time he pitches.

Q. Did you think about going to Bosnic when you went to Gilreath, just based on the fact that this was one game elimination?

BRADY ALLEN: Yeah, the third inning was too early to go to Bosnic. The goal was to try to get four innings out of the combination of C.J. and Gilreath. That was a lot of pressure to put on your bullpen to bring guys in in the third inning. We weren't going to do that. We hoped that we could get at least to the fourth and hopefully the fifth before we handed the ball off to the key bullpen guys there in the back. We just didn't do it. It just is what it is.

Q. And it seemed like you all squared up a lot of balls today without a whole lot of luck there, diving plays to start the game and end the game by those guys. Offensively, it just hasn't been great, especially over the second half of the season. What do you work on these next eight days to try to get these guys clicking on all cylinders going into regionals?

MARK KINGSTON: The first thing is we need to get these guys healthy. We're going to have nine, ten days now to get healthy, to get our strength back. We can look at video, and we'll be swinging the bats well come regional time, no doubt in my mind. But at the end of the day, we need to get guys healthy and get back in the weight room and use these nine days to our advantage and come out really fresh, real healthy, feeling really strong and rejuvenated wherever we play our regional.

Q. Brady and Wes both talked about situational hitting. That is something that they needed to improve on as a team, they felt like. Is that something that you see as well, or is that kind of just what they're seeing?

MARK KINGSTON: We all see it, and when you lose games, you have to come up with reasons why you lost. Obviously, there was a key at bat there early on. I thought Wimmer did a tremendous job. We had the guy at second base. Wimmer did a tremendous job of fighting the two strikes and getting our guy to third. The job of the next guy is to get him in. There was a hanging breaking ball on the first pitch that we talk about all the time. Put the ball in play, get the run in, and we didn't do it.

So it's just a matter of continuing to learn, continuing to figure out what is necessary. And when you play at this level against this kind of competition in the SEC and in the regionals, sometimes one pitch can be all the difference. So our guys just need to keep learning that and grasping it, and then when they get their opportunities, need to execute it.

Q. You talked after the Tennessee series that you feel like this is still one of the best 16 teams in the country. After today, how frustrating a loss is that knowing a deep run in Hoover could have really helped your hosting resume out?

MARK KINGSTON: Yeah, it is frustrating, but you know what, it wasn't meant to be. We had a plan. We went with our plan, which I think was a sound plan. We weren't going to move up our weekend rotation early on two days' rest, and we weren't going to play our position players and have them have setbacks. So you have to live with the results of your plan.

Disappointed we didn't pitch better, especially early in the game, but C.J. has done a good job for us, and John has done a good job for us. When it doesn't go your way, you need to continue to have your players' backs, teammates need to have each other's backs, and you just focus on the next opportunity you have. And the next opportunity we have is the NCAA Tournament, which very few other teams in the country will have that opportunity. So we'll be ready to go.

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