

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## LSU Tigers

### Paul Mainieri

#### Postgame Press Conference



Georgia 4, LSU 1

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by head coach Paul Mainieri. Coach, before we take questions, if you would please give us your general thoughts on today's game.

PAUL MAINIERI: Well, first of all, it's a tough loss for us. I give a lot of credit to Georgia, especially their pitching. They ran three really good left-handers out there against us today, and obviously we couldn't do much with them. We had an opportunity in the first inning, bases loaded, nobody out, and we were only able to get one run out of it. That really was kind of the story of the game.

We had a couple opportunities later in the ball game and couldn't capitalize on those. I think a lot of that had to do with the quality of the pitching that they were throwing against us. I was really proud of Landon Marceaux. Unfortunately, it's happened too many times this year that he pitched his heart out, and we haven't been able to give him the run support. His record ought to be really stellar -- his one-loss record, I should say -- because he's pitched like that all year for us, just pitched so courageously and with just a warrior mentality.

Unfortunately, his record is kind of pedestrian because we just haven't given him the run support. Part of it is because he's gone up against other team's great pitching and the games have been low-scoring games. But I'm really proud of him and what he did, especially on short rest. No side work in between his last start and this start. Obviously, he deserved a better fate.

Really the story of the game was they turned a double play on us and we couldn't complete our double play defensively. Otherwise, we might still be playing. The game really was a 1-1 ball game. We had the double play to end the inning, and unfortunately, we just couldn't complete it. They ended up hitting a bases-loaded double

after we didn't complete the double play. Then we just couldn't muster a comeback. We tried but just couldn't finish the rally.

We have to take it and accept it. It's new territory for us, to be honest with you. We've never lost on Tuesday here in Hoover. Quite frankly, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to plan to do for the next several days. I have to put a lot of thought into how to react to this because it's uncharted waters for us.

#### **Q. Do you believe your team has done enough to earn an at-large bid into the 2021 NCAA Tournament?**

PAUL MAINIERI: Well, I don't have a vote, but I hope so. If you're asking me do I think we're one of the best 64 teams in the country, I certainly feel that way. And we're tied for eighth place in the SEC. We lost this game, obviously. I hope the whole selection doesn't come down to how you did in one game against an opponent.

The selection committee has a tough job to do, I know that. I think our RPI speaks for itself. We played arguably the toughest or one of the top two or three toughest schedules in the country. We've done a lot of good things, and I would hope that we get invited to the Big Dance, but I don't get a vote. So we're just going to be at the mercy of the selection committee, and we'll hope so.

I believe we did, but like I said, I don't know. It's not a good position to be in, I can tell you that. I've been in this position before, and it's not a lot of fun to be at the mercy of the selection committee.

#### **Q. I know you just mentioned it, you guys are kind of entering uncharted waters here the next couple of days. Do you anticipate you guys will continue to practice and continue to, I guess, get yourselves ready for whatever happens early next week?**

PAUL MAINIERI: I'm sure we'll practice. I just don't know what the schedule is. I haven't had enough time to kind of digest it and think about it and come up with a plan of action. I've got plenty of time to figure that out now unfortunately. I haven't even talked to the team yet. I have



to gather my thoughts and figure out what we're going to do.

We'll head home tomorrow morning, I'm sure, and come up with a plan of action. I wish I could share something with you, but I really don't know what we're going to do yet.

**Q. How much did you wrestle with trying to move the runners over early?**

PAUL MAINIERI: Which situation are you talking about?

**Q. I believe it was the second inning. I think you had the bottom of your order up, no outs, chance to move some guys early.**

PAUL MAINIERI: I don't recall which inning you're talking about, to be honest with you. We were down 4-1 second inning.

**Q. Too early to try the --**

PAUL MAINIERI: Oh, when Cranford tried to bunt a couple of times? Yeah, we were trying to. He fouled off two bunts. Is that the inning you're talking about?

**Q. Yes, sir.**

PAUL MAINIERI: Yeah, we did, and we tried to advance. We were down 4-1. I wanted to advance the runners. And Cranford, I told him to bunt twice, and he fouled the bunts off both times. And then I thought it was too early to have him bunt with two strikes, so we had him swing away and then he struck out.

And then I tried to start the runners on the 3-2 pitch. Is that the inning I started the runners at the 3-2 pitch, and Milazzo swung at a pitch that was high and he swung through it and they threw the runner out at third base?

Yeah, so we did. We tried to advance them. We just didn't execute, unfortunately.

**Q. I'm seeing the updated RPI has you at 24. Have you seen a situation where a top 25 team doesn't get a bid? I mean, is that really possible?**

PAUL MAINIERI: I don't know. I haven't -- we didn't get a bid in 2011, and I know our RPI was pretty high. I don't remember exactly what it was. I believe it was in the 20s, but I don't remember exactly what it was, to be honest with you. I haven't followed what other teams would have not received a bid that would have been in the 20s through the years. We haven't been in that position very frequently, quite frankly, so I haven't followed it very closely.

We're going to have optimism and hope for the best and hope we get a chance and have a clean slate. If we do, we're going to be very positive and confident that we can do it, and we're just going to have to wait and see. It's not an enviable position to be in, but we're just going to have to wait and see.

**Q. How much weight do you think the selection committee puts on conference tournaments? Do you think there should be that much weight on what you do on a few days instead of maybe a body of work of an entire season?**

PAUL MAINIERI: Well, I think if you do well, it should weigh heavily because, if you're here and you're beating a lot of good teams and you win three or four games, sure, they should count it. But when it's a single elimination, one game and done, I don't know that it should be held against you just for one game. I think the body of work over the year is probably more important, 56 games. Our out-of-conference record was really good. I think our RPI for non-conference was in the 20s as well.

Then we're in the No. 1 RPI conference in the country. Granted, we didn't finish .500 in the conference. If we'd have turned two games around, we'd have been 15-15. We lost a lot of close games, seven one-run games, that we had a chance to be a .500 team or better.

Yeah, I just don't know how they look at it. It's not a very transparent process, so I don't know really what they say, what they look at that closely. I know years ago I used to try to figure it out when I was a younger coach. And I know reading in the manual, they used to talk about how a team finishes, and if that was a factor, then, you know, we finished strong. We won our last three series. We won four of our last five. We turned it around and finished with a flourish. That should weigh heavily. But I don't know if that is, in reality, what they believe to be the case.

Like I said, the conversations are not made public, and you have no idea what different people think and what they're saying and how they vote. So you're just at their mercy.

**Q. Do you think it's a different outcome if you guys get that double play in the first inning and leave Georgia scoreless?**

PAUL MAINIERI: The result of a game is an accumulation of things that happen for nine full innings. That's why we play 27 outs. So you're not going to point the finger at any one play or any player or anything like that, but every little thing matters when you're playing against great teams.

Like I said in the first inning, we had the bases loaded, nobody out. You'd like to get more than one run. We hit into a double play. You credit Georgia, they turned the double play, and we ended up only getting one run. In the bottom of the first inning, they had the bases loaded, and they hit a ball, they had a run in, and they hit a ball that our third baseman made a nice stop on and fed the double play feed. Unfortunately, the throw to first base was not accurate, and we weren't able to complete the double play.

If we complete the double play, the inning's over, and we've got a 1-1 game.

Who would have predicted there would not be more scoring for the next eight innings? We don't know, but every play is important. You just can't say that one play cost you the ball game because, if we score enough runs, then you don't look back at one play and say, hey, this play cost you the ball game. The result of the game is an accumulation of everything that happened throughout the game, and you would never blame one play, one kid, one circumstance for anything. Everything matters.

So it's unfortunate that we didn't turn the double play because Landon Marceaux pitched so well. Unfortunately, that inning got extended. He left the change-up up, and the kid hit the double with the bases loaded, and those three runs ended up being the difference runs-wise in the final result.

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