

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Dave Van Horn

Postgame Press Conference

Arkansas 11, Georgia 2

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, Coach. If you could, give us an opening statement, recap the game, and we'll have questions for you.

DAVE VAN HORN: Obviously, Lael Lockhart had a great game, just peppering the zone in and out, pretty good breaking ball. Got a little change-up going there and kept them off balance a little bit. But the key was keeping ahead, and he was on a roll.

Offensively, we got a couple big hits, but they walked a lot, gave us some things, made a couple errors, and we took advantage of it. We never could really get that big hit in the middle of the game to put them away, but we just kept chipping away after we scored the 6. Just a solid game by our team. We didn't really make any mistakes.

Q. The performance from Lockhart tonight, is that something -- I know he's looked pretty good his last couple outings, but is that something you saw coming, like him giving you seven strong innings as he did tonight?

DAVE VAN HORN: We knew he had it in him obviously. I think the last two outings leading up to tonight have been his best, and tonight was his best. I would say we felt like tonight he'd pitch really well. You never know. It's a big stage. He's never been here, but he is older.

Really good to see. Got to keep him rolling, get him ready for -- to pitch again probably in eight or nine or ten days.

Q. What was it about Lael that maybe was different today than some of those other starts where he struggled maybe after the third or fourth innings?

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, number one, right out of the gate, he's throwing strikes, and he's throwing the ball



where he wanted to. He's working off his fastball. You know, it's warm. Maybe he likes warm weather. Towards the end of the season, some guys kick it in late. He started out pretty good this year, and he faded a little bit, but then he got better.

He dug himself out, and we're getting what we thought we were getting from him. He's throwing the ball extremely well.

Q. He was one strike away from that seven inning perfect game, gave up a couple hits, gave up the home run. But then he kind of gathered himself and got the strikeout. As well as he pitched, I guess, was that kind of a drag to see him not be able to get that perfect game?

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, of course it was. We're right there. We're pulling for him. We felt like we were going to win the game. It wasn't about winning the game. It was about an individual on our team that was having an incredible night, got a chance to have a perfect game, a seven-inning game. The defense backed him up. The offense scored ten runs for him. We got a chance to leave early, and we got kind of a seeing eye single, and it was kind of a bummer. Then he's right there to at least get the shutout, and he makes a pitch that their lefty put a really good swing on it and back spun it and traveled, got out of the park.

A little disappointing. I was disappointed for him. But I like the way he went out there and he finished it, got through the inning. Look for this next time he gets the ball.

Q. Do you have an update on Slavens' ankle injury?

DAVE VAN HORN: No, I don't.

Q. Wondering if you thought about the pitching plans for tomorrow, what you might do?

DAVE VAN HORN: Still waiting to see who wins tonight, and we'll make a decision after that.

Q. On Slavens, he came back in the dugout. Is that



uplifting? He didn't break his ankle or anything like that?

DAVE VAN HORN: It looks like it's probably not broke. At first, it didn't look good obviously. And then seeing him, but I think the pain went away a little bit. He did come back. He's got a boot on his foot right now, just keeping an eye on it, but I don't know exactly what's going on there. I haven't had anybody talk to me about it. I'm sure I'll find out in a little bit.

Yeah, it was definitely uplifting. Looks like there's some opportunity for him to get healthy, but we'll know more later obviously.

Q. Since we won't get you after the next game, what are the possibilities for you? Could it be Wicklander or Bolden? We saw Bolden with a black eye, ice on his eye. What happened there?

DAVE VAN HORN: Those would be the two we're looking at. Right before the game, he was bent over tying his shoe down the line and somebody threw a ball, and I think it one-hopped him and hit him in the eye. How about that? Somebody made a bad throw. I don't know who threw it. I just know it hit right below his eye. He had ice on it, but he's fine.

Q. Coach, if Slavens does have to miss some time, what's the plan there first? Will you do kind of what you did today with Nesbit at third and moving Smith over to first? Or are you considering other options?

DAVE VAN HORN: There's other options. That's probably what I'd do if I wanted to put the best defense out there. I could put someone else over there, but at this time, I don't know if we're ready for that yet, but we'll see. I could go with two or three guys.

Q. I know you've mentioned a couple of times, Welch has been working at first. Is he still just kind of learning that position? Probably a little bit hard for him to get a shot there this season?

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, there's a possibility there. Obviously, he is just learning that position. I don't know if I'm ready to go there yet.

Q. And last one from me is Goodheart has been kind of struggling, had an 0 for 6 day today. What are you seeing from him at the plate, and how do you get him going?

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, I don't know. I think he's -- lack of confidence, that's what I'm seeing. Need him to go up

there and start swinging the bat. Stop worrying about striking out and just go hit. Mechanically, not a whole lot wrong. I watch him take BP every day, and he unloads on pitches.

He just needs to get through it, it happens, and go hit tomorrow.

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