

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Cullen Smith

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas 11, Georgia 2

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

CULLEN SMITH: Pretty much Lockhart threw his butt off, and we were able to capitalize on a couple of miscues from Georgia. That's what our offense does. You can't give us extra outs. We're going to do that to you.

Q. Cullen, you went over and played first after Brady went out. How comfortable are you there? It may be something you might end up having to do a little more now.

CULLEN SMITH: Yeah, first off, I think Slavens is going to be all right. He'll be back in eventually. It looked all right. I'm just worried about him, first off. I'm very comfortable. I played there all fall. That was the one position in my college career that I really hadn't played, so I took it upon myself to really get some reps over there. I feel great over there, honestly.

Q. And your eye tonight, looked like you were seeing the ball well. Could you talk about your double and home run.

CULLEN SMITH: The double, I got 2-0, and then I got a little big. Tried to do a little something I usually don't try to do, tried to pull a home run, pull aside and swing through it. And then I'm like, all right, I need to get these guys over, whether it's a ground ball through the 4 hole or line drive. He just put it in a good spot, and I happened to put a good swing on it.

The home run, I think, if I'm not mistaken, he kind of threw me a change-up. I don't think he threw a fastball. Maybe if he did, it was in the dirt. Just stayed back on my back leg. That's what I've been working on. I'm seeing balls really deep, for what they are. I'm seeing spin well, and heaters,

I think I'm on time for. So I'm feeling really good now.

Q. You mentioned it in your opening there, but what was it like playing behind Lockhart today? What did you see from him?

CULLEN SMITH: Oh, it was incredible, man. Fifth year to another fifth year, man, it was awesome to watch. That dude can pitch. He can absolutely pitch. Then when you get an umpire today that was being a little generous, maybe one ball, ball and a half off, that's what he's going to do to teams. Dudes can't hit that when he's consistently painting the ball, and he's keeping the slider, curve ball low, it's almost unhittable. I knew that was going to happen after that first inning. I thought he did a heck of a job. Heck of a job.

Q. He's one out away from the seven inning perfect game. What did you see on that little infield hit? You were right there. What did you see on that play?

CULLEN SMITH: I was hurting for him. I was hurting for him, man. I wanted it so bad. I wanted it so bad. Just a chopper through the 6 hole. I think if I'm not mistaken, there's two strikes -- two strikes, two outs, and then he hits a chopper. I tried to stay on the bag as long as I could. I was like I won't let this ball get by me before it's not an out. It's a hit all day. It is what it is. I think he definitely wanted it, but I think he's content with his outing for sure.

Q. Brady, it looked like -- as you said, it looked like a serious injury, but he was able to come in the dugout and stuff. How big of an uplift was that seeing him in the dugout after that?

CULLEN SMITH: It was awesome. Even when he had to get up -- I know he had two guys carrying him a little bit. But for him to apply even a little pressure on there, it was very good to see. They put that replay on the big board, and I was like, ooh, that is not good. Hopefully, it's just a sprain instead of a break. Corey, our trainer, came out, and I think he got an X-Ray. I'm not 100 percent. But he came out and said he's going to be all right. Just got to ice bucket it. Ice the crap out of it, man. And I know he'll be back as soon as he can. In the meantime, we need to

have some guys step up and fill that role.

Q. I don't know if you guys pay that much attention, Mississippi State and Tennessee as higher seeds ahead and got beat today. You guys avoided that, really jumped on Georgia early. What did you think of that, the fact that you kind of took the fight to them there in the second inning with six runs?

CULLEN SMITH: Yeah, speaking on Mississippi State and Tennessee, man, we don't really look into that. We play whoever's in front of us. We don't care who we'll meet in the championship or in the semifinals or next game, it doesn't matter. We play Hog baseball, and we know we're going to win games.

Basically, they kind of switched the starter on us. We thought we were going to get Sullivan, who threw Friday night against us. Actually, I didn't see him, so I was excited to face him. When we consistently are taking good pitches and seeing balls in the dirt and seeing spin and not swinging at fastballs at chest level, I know we're going to do some damage. We're going to put up double digit runs every time. This offense is very potent, very potent.

Q. And you talked about how disappointed you were for Lael, and then obviously he was disappointed. He came back and got that strike after giving up the home run. What did that show you besides maybe the bigger strike zone, what else do you think was really working for him today?

CULLEN SMITH: I thought he was locating his fastball really well. I thought he was keeping them on their toes. From what I was being able to see once I moved over to first base, it just looked like they were like, all right, slider's coming. Fastball came. All right. Fastball's coming, slider came. I think he caught them in between pitches. They were laying on the fastball, and they were early on the slider. It was incredible, man. It was a great job. That's how a good pitcher throws right there for sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports