

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Ole Miss Rebels

Mike Bianco

Postgame Press Conference



Vanderbilt 5, Mississippi 4

MIKE BIANCO: Just a tough one. When you get walked off, obviously, it's tough to put into words in just a few minutes afterwards. I thought it was a hell of a baseball game. I thought both teams played super hard, and after a probably couple-hour rain delay, we get started close to 9:30 in the evening. Both pitchers, Little for them and Diamond for us, I thought were spectacular. And both guys out of the bullpen, Murphy for them and Dougherty for us, were terrific.

So runs were kind of at a premium. We get a couple of long balls by Elko, which the heroics just continue to happen thankfully, but tonight you got to credit them being able to put a ninth inning together because Jack was pitching so, so good.

Q. You've been missing him for a while, Derek battling through adversity and being able to pitch through it in the fourth inning there. Three straight hits, scores a run, but then he gets out of it and he continues to pitch. What did you think of his outing? Shows a lot of growth.

MIKE BIANCO: I think so. That's about as good as he's pitched. Maybe next to the opening weekend against Texas in the Dome. Looked down, he's got eight strikeouts in 5 1/3. I thought he was terrific, I thought, probably on short rest. And we got him out after about 90 pitches, but he's still throwing the ball in the low 90s. I thought he's been as good as he's been all year.

Q. Obviously, you talked about Jack there. What was going well for him when he was pitching well? And what did you say to him in the ninth? Did you consider taking him out, or what went through in the ninth?

MIKE BIANCO: Just an explosive fastball and throwing

enough sliders in the strike zone just to keep them off balance but being able to locate the fastball on both sides of the plate. In the ninth, I was really just trying to give him a little bit of a breather, and of course, Isaiah Thomas, who we struggled with in Oxford getting out even though we got some strikeouts tonight, he ended up getting a couple big hits for him. But I thought Jack was terrific.

Q. Was Taylor available today or ailing after yesterday?

MIKE BIANCO: He was a little tender today, so we weren't going to pitch him.

Q. Was Derek just simply at the pitch count there, or did that long offensive inning potentially get to him a little bit? It seemed like it lingered on for a few minutes.

MIKE BIANCO: I think you're right. That's somewhat what I was alluding to and probably didn't finish the statement. The inning with the injury of their pitcher Little coming off the field and a couple pitching changes and of course the home run and some other things going on in that inning, it made it pretty long even though we only scored three, and really it was by homer. I think that squeezed them a little bit.

Really, we wanted to stay under 100 with the short rest, and with the left-handers coming up after the walk, I just thought it was the best move to go to Kimbrell. Really Jackson didn't do anything poorly. They go, we should have thrown over to first base, but we don't, and they get a ball hit about as weakly as you can hit -- again, not taking anything away from them -- but through where the shortstop was playing. And then a bunt that was -- I know Jackson wishes he would have had it back. They try like a little safety squeeze, and the runner wasn't going home. He didn't need to check.

We just didn't communicate well enough. We probably should have just thrown the ball to first base, and we would have probably gotten off the field with still a lead. But I think physically he threw pretty well.



Q. I hesitate to ask, but do you know who's starting tomorrow?

MIKE BIANCO: Yeah, Drew McDaniel. How about that one? You've been asking all week, we give you one. There you go.

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