

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Matt Goodheart

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas 6, Vanderbilt 4

THE MODERATOR: You can just give me a quick recap of the game and then we'll shoot questions to you.

MATT GOODHEART: It's pretty fresh. It's kind of hard to go back over it when it's this close to an exciting game. I'm just proud of the team, every single one of them. We were excited to play. We were excited to face Vandy and Roker. We know how good they are. We showed up ready to play. Like I said, I'm proud of them.

Q. Matt, what have these last few weeks been like for you slumping, and also what was the key to breaking out of that slump today?

MATT GOODHEART: It was kind of a weird slump, so to say. I don't like to use the word slump personally. I'm just weird about it. I'd have one game that I wasn't proud of, and then I'd have a game that I was 0 for 3 but hit three balls right on the screws right at someone. I felt like this was no -- I felt like there wasn't a whole lot of luck falling my way. It was just a combination of things that didn't go my way. It is what it is. But law of averages.

Q. And you talked about the excitement of getting to face Roker and everything. What was y'all's approach like with him, and how were you able to get his pitch count up and get him out of there so quickly?

MATT GOODHEART: I mean, you kind of said the approach. He's as renowned as they come for a reason. He has tremendous stuff. The approach was to get his pitch count up, see pitches, try to keep him in the zone, and hit the ones that are.

Q. The at bat in the fourth against him, can you step us through it and getting the ball over the left fielder's head?

MATT GOODHEART: Yeah, there were runners on second and third with less than two, so I wanted him -- I think they were less than two. Just try to get good bat on the ball. I got ahead in the count. I didn't think he was going to give me a fastball and hit our headcount with a base open, and he had a right-handed hitter coming up. But I was kind of thinking, maybe, if he does give me that fastball, I'll be ready for it, and I hit it.

Q. And then you guys get the day off tomorrow and you're in the semifinals. Can you just talk about what Dave said after the game and how you all are feeling?

MATT GOODHEART: We're as excited as we can be. We're as confident as we can be. Having the day off gives some of the arms a breather. We're going to try to stay in the groove, stay locked in, and we're just as excited as we can be.

Q. Glad to see you're okay after that ball hit you and knocked your helmet off, I guess. What was that like?

MATT GOODHEART: Obviously, it caught me off guard. Kumar throws pretty hard. My initial reaction was just like, it was coming at my face. I tried to get out of the way. Fortunately, it just barely clipped the ear piece of my helmet right there. It looked worse than it was, fortunately. Could have been just as bad. I'm grateful. I'm grateful that it didn't injure me or cause any harm, happy to be here.

Q. And you guys had to shuffle around obviously with Slavens out, but Bates got a hit, and Cohen got a hit. It seemed like it worked pretty well. It just seemed like whoever is asked to go out there, you guys just make it work. What did you think about how guys responded playing maybe some unfamiliar roles?

MATT GOODHEART: It was great. It was great to see guys step up like Bates, who hasn't had a whole lot of experience in high leverage situations like there were today. He's tough. Fortunately, I got to play with him in the 5A South, Arkansas. I'd seen that grit and toughness before I even stepped foot on campus. I personally had no doubt in Bates, and it showed tonight that he's not afraid of anyone.

Other things like Wallace playing third base. You can go on down the list. Everyone stepped up and performed as well as they could have.

Q. A lot of smiles in that post-game huddle in the outfield. What were you guys saying after a win like that?

MATT GOODHEART: Just kind of not necessarily a sigh of relief, but whenever you're playing a team as good as Vandy is, whenever that ninth inning is over and you come out victorious, it is kind of a sigh of relief because, like I said, they're a really good team. We were just excited to be who we are, excited at all the hard work that we've put in to being as good as we are is paying off.

Q. What's it like whenever Kevin comes in the game and seeing him shut it down like he has so many times this year?

MATT GOODHEART: It's the same old song and dance. Kevin has pitched as well as I've seen anyone at any level. It's unbelievable. We don't expect it to be perfect every single time. It's baseball. It's not going to be perfect every single time. There's going to be bumps along the road, and that's when it's our job to line up the defense, to pick him up whenever he doesn't have a great day. From a mentality standpoint, we're as confident in him as we can be.

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