

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Saturday, May 29, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Arkansas Razorbacks

## Dave Van Horn

### Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas - 3, Mississippi - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're going to start with Coach Van Horn. If you could give us your thoughts on the game.

DAVE VAN HORN: It ended up being, obviously, a low scoring game, pitchers duel, bullpen game, whatever you want to call it. Runs were hard to come by. Both teams played really good defense. Pitchers worked out of a couple of jams. We got a big swing in the first inning and got us two runs and then another big swing, a two-out double that we scored a runner after a walk. That ended up being the deciding run.

Kind of a gutsy job by our team. Just toughed it out, found a way to win through a couple guys that hadn't thrown a whole lot, through Vermillion and Noland. I thought Noland was outstanding. Tole came in and really gave us an opportunity to win the ball game because they could have blown it open there. They already had two in and a couple on, and he got out of that inning with no more damage.

We came back and scored a run and took the lead and ended up winning the ball game. So not a lot of action, a little drama, and it was a big win for us.

**Q. Dave, you touched on it with there with Tole, but the bases were loaded, and Elko and Dunhurst were coming up for Ole Miss. What did you tell him when he gave him the ball, and what do you think it says about him being a freshman and handling that spot as well as he did?**

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, before I gave him the ball, I looked at him, and I said, can you handle this situation? Are you -- I don't know if I said scared or nervous. I said, before I give you the ball, I need to hear what you have to say. He said, I'm good. I told him go out and fill up the zone and do what you do, see what happens, and he did a great job.

**Q. I think he threw 27 pitches. Is that about the max for him right now, or is he a guy that could maybe give you more as he pitches a little bit more?**

DAVE VAN HORN: That was the most he's thrown in a game this year, according to Coach Hobbs because we were talking about it, and we thought -- really two innings is what he gave us, don't want to stretch it. We discussed a couple of pitchers and decided to go with Noland, and Connor didn't disappoint. He was really good tonight.

**Q. Dave, congratulations. Usually, when you guys have won a game, it's been Kevin Kopps closing it out. Connor did his Kevin Kopps imitation. I know Kopps never left the dugout, so I guess you decided you were not going to pitch him no matter what. Was it that Connor was pitching so well that you thought, hey, let's leave him in?**

DAVE VAN HORN: We weren't going to pitch Kevin today no matter what. We were going to go Connor a couple innings, but he threw so well, we said we've got to let him finish, and that's what we did.

**Q. I know it's been a tough year for Connor with injury and whatnot. Would you say that's the best he's thrown this year?**

DAVE VAN HORN: I would say yes. He's had a good inning here and there, but as far as putting three back to back to back, that was the best.

**Q. Any idea what Vermillion's injury was or what his status would be postseason?**

DAVE VAN HORN: It's a biceps cramp, and it's been happening a little bit, so they're trying to work it out. But it's cramping up.

**Q. With what Noland gave you and losing Pallette already, how big is that that Connor did what he did?**

DAVE VAN HORN: It's huge. Any time we can give a guy some confidence and a guy that's ready to go out there in

postseason play, it's a big deal. Connor did that tonight.

**Q. Dave, what did you see on Cullen's home run there in the first inning?**

DAVE VAN HORN: It looked like he either threw a cutter or took a little bit off the fastball, I don't know. He just tried to get ahead of him, and I just feel like that -- I don't know, or he just really missed his spot. He left it kind of down the middle in, and Cullen, he got most of it. Where it was hit, we felt like it had a chance to get out of the park. That's really probably the only part of the ballpark where the wind really wasn't affecting how far the ball would go because we hit one later that inning -- I didn't hit it. Charlie Welch hit it. So it wouldn't have been we.

But Charlie got all of one, and, man, it pushed it down. We thought we had another two-run Homer, but he just got him a good pitch down the middle in, and he got it.

**Q. And Bolden gave you four scoreless today. What did you think of his outing, and what was working for him? Was four innings kind of about what you were hoping to get from him?**

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, he threw too many pitches. I mean, 77 pitches in four innings, that was enough pitches. Get him out of there with some confidence. He responded to the fastball pretty good. Sometimes the umpire would give it to you. Sometimes he wouldn't. Didn't have the breaking ball early, but really the last couple innings, his breaking ball was better. But it was really more about a fastball with some sink.

**Q. You put Goodheart in left field today. How do you think he handled it out there, and is that a position he could maybe play for you down the stretch?**

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, I thought he did fine. He could play there. He played there a full season when he was in junior college, and we worked him out there. It's all about how his arm feels, and his arm feels pretty good right now. So, yeah, you might see that again.

**Q. You guys had a really competitive series, obviously, with Tennessee. What do you think about playing those guys again in the championship game?**

DAVE VAN HORN: First off, it doesn't surprise me we're playing Tennessee. They're playing really well. They won the Eastern Division, we won the West. It's going to be a really good ball game.

I think that they may be in a little better shape than us as far as pitching, but you never know. It's just one game. I'm

just really proud of our team getting through today and finding a way to get to that championship game.

**Q. I don't know if you guys had a whole lot to play for, other than pride, coming in here. I think you had a No. 1 seed overall sewed up, but now there's obviously no question about that. What would it mean -- I know Arkansas has never won the title, 0-4, I think, in these championship games. What would it mean for you guys if you could go ahead and win it all for the first time?**

DAVE VAN HORN: I think it would be big for our program to win the tournament. You said it, Arkansas has never won it. So we're going to do the best we can.

**Q. I heard you and Tony talked, I guess, between games. Was that a good conversation? Maybe that other deal was blown out of proportion. Are you guys good, I guess is what I'm asking.**

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, it was a good conversation. I feel like we're good. It's just two guys that want to win, two competitors. It's all good.

**Q. Do you know who you're going to start tomorrow? Will Kevin be available tomorrow?**

DAVE VAN HORN: To answer your first question, I'm not sure yet. Second question, I'm not sure yet. We'll just figure that out tonight.

**Q. What does it mean to you guys to win a game like this without Kevin? Not that you don't want to use him, but you proved you can win a tight game against a really good team and you didn't need him.**

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, we told him before the game we weren't going to use Kevin. We needed to win without him, and they did it. It's a good feeling. Really, we won a tight game without Kevin. We won a lot of games without Kevin, but we scored a lot of runs or whatever. On the weekend, we've used Kevin a couple times, most every weekend.

Just giving him another day's rest. If we decide to pitch him tomorrow, we will. Still not 100 percent on it. I think it's great that we went out and won a one-run game without him.

**Q. Did Kevin ever come up to you today and say, hey, I'm ready. Put me in, Coach. Did he understand he wasn't pitching today and he was okay with it?**

DAVE VAN HORN: I think he understood. I didn't write his name on the board. I don't know if he even had his spikes

on. He probably did, but he didn't need them.

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