

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Jalen Battles

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas - 7, Tennessee - 2

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Jalen Battles.

Q. Jalen, what's it mean to you to be a part of Arkansas' first ever team to win an SEC Tournament championship?

JALEN BATTLES: It's big, of course. Just coming here, being able to play. It was huge. It's been very fun, and I mean I can't be more blessed to be a part of this special team.

Q. What did you see on your home run today? Could you walk us through that at-bat?

JALEN BATTLES: As you all saw, the first pitch, he quick pitched me. In my head, I'm like really dude? It kind of made me mad. I was expecting another off-speed pitch, and he hung a breaking ball, and I took my anger out on it.

Q. We just had Cullen on, and he said Dave was as fired up in that post-game celebration as he's seen him. He said, you guys were out there to win it for Dave. What do you think about that?

JALEN BATTLES: That's probably the most fired up we've seen Coach in a while. He's always locked into the game. Seeing that brought the fire to us as well. I guess we were playing for Coach as well.

Q. You had a good tournament, got the MVP of it. How are you feeling about your game right now?

JALEN BATTLES: I'm feeling very confident. Coming in, I talked to my uncle, and he gave me a lot of inspiration, just getting my head right forward. Honestly, I thought Cullen was going to win MVP of the tournament because he was outstanding every game. I'm very blessed to be the MVP.

Q. Jalen, congratulations. Cullen moved from third to first, and you had, I guess, Wallace there at third. It seemed like the infield, you guys really didn't miss a beat. What did you think about the infield play even when you had to move some guys around?

JALEN BATTLES: Wherever we play anybody, it's going to be the best defense. We just kept the same confidence as we've had the whole year. It was good.

Q. Winning the regular season like you all did and now winning this tournament title, not many teams have done that. What kind of momentum does that give you guys going into the regional next weekend?

JALEN BATTLES: I would probably say it's just the same as all year. We're a very confident team. I know we think we can play with anybody and beat them. Especially if we have our fans as well going into the regional tournament. It's going to be even more fun.

Q. When Slavens was injured earlier this week, you lost a lot of production. Smith, at least the last few games, has made up for that. What did you think of the play he had this week and how he filled Brady's shoes?

JALEN BATTLES: It was huge. He probably didn't like going to first, but it was best for the team. He was very effective and very bought in for the team to play first.

Q. How much desire was there for you guys to win this tournament after winning the regular season and not having a dispute about whether or not you're the best team in the conference?

JALEN BATTLES: We just came in having that mindset we're going to win it. We wanted it so bad. We got to this last game, and we're like, why don't we just win it now. So it was fun.

Q. Jalen, I was just wondering, your batting average probably isn't what you'd like it to be on the season, but it seems like you come up with big hits and timely hits. Just kind of what you thought about the season



you've had as a hitter.

JALEN BATTLES: For me, I felt like I started out pretty well, and then it kind of went away. Towards the end, it's gotten better. It's just taking one bat at a time and just really lock it in.

Q. Jalen, it was a pretty big stage for a freshman today. How did you think Jackson Wiggins handled things on the mound?

JALEN BATTLES: Probably the best. I mean, in my head, I was thinking, like go get revenge from what they did, but he did very well, and I'm proud of him. He gave us good innings, and it was good.

Q. How would you rate your defensive play, stopping the hole in the force out at second base? It looked pretty sweet on TV.

JALEN BATTLES: Probably one of the best plays I've made in my entire life. So it was fun.

Q. All the analysts have you guys pretty much No. 1 in the tournament. You've won every weekend you've played this year. How do you feel about your chances heading into the postseason?

JALEN BATTLES: Very confident. We're ready to get started, just keep winning really.

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