

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Tennessee Volunteers

Pete Derkay

Postgame Press Conference



Alabama on Wednesday and rally with three straight wins and feet hard with Arkansas for nine innings? Why do you think the team can overcome that adversity?

PETE DERKAY: We've got a really good baseball team, first and foremost. It's always the next thing with us. We're not going to get caught up in what happened yesterday because that's over with. We can let it fuel us to get the job done on that particular day. So that's how we're able to push through everything. It's always what's next, and we're really good at turning the page and putting all our chips on the table.

Q. Arkansas took their first lead there in the fifth inning. Did you guys feel any extra pressure to get something going on offense before Kopps was going to get the ball or just kind of business as usual?

PETE DERKAY: It's just business as usual. Every time a team goes out there and puts up a couple runs, we always say time to answer back. We were just unable to do that today, but that's always the mindset is when someone goes out there and scores, all right, we're going to give you a little jab right back, and we're going to score as well.

Q. I imagine there's been some parts of your career you maybe wouldn't have believed this Tennessee program would be here with this many fans in this moment. What does it say about your team that you guys are here? It never seems like it's enough just to be in the big moment, be in the big game, but it's always a goal to push it to the next level and get a big win.

PETE DERKAY: Yeah, you nailed that one. It's always about the next thing, what can we do next? I mean, it was just unbelievable to look up in the stands and see that much orange. I love this fan base, and they're really showing out for us, and we can kind of feed off their energy. So we're just going to go out there and give them a good show and compete to the best of our ability.

Q. It kind of seems like this team's MO all season has been the ability to bounce back from a loss like this

Arkansas - 7, Tennessee - 2

THE MODERATOR: If you don't mind, open it up with a quick statement and recap the game.

PETE DERKAY: Came out of the gates kind of real strong. They put together some really good swings on some really good pitches, and we kind of fell behind, kind of pushed a little bit trying to get back in it, and then they made another little late run. They have a great team, and sometimes that's just how the cookie crumbles.

Q. I guess you all are going in there and you're getting in there against Kopps and you're trying to get something going. When you put that swing on that ball, you're thinking, all right, here we go again. This time we're going to flip this around and try to get those guys late.

PETE DERKAY: Yeah, with this team, I never feel like the game's over until it's actually over and the umpires go back in the locker room. He just left me a pitch over the middle, and I put a good swing on it. I thought that might have sparked it a little bit. Hat's off to him. He's a great pitcher, and he made the pitches he needed to do to finish the game.

Q. Just what was this experience like? The five games, five days, just the postseason feel. Was there anything different or new that you learned about this team while you guys were in Hoover?

PETE DERKAY: This experience was great. You could tell, even after the first day, we didn't want to go home. Now we have to because it's officially over. No, it was just a great week, and what I learned about this team is we love playing ball together. We're going to keep fighting and give it everything we've got every single day.

Q. Why do you think this team is able to lose to

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one. What did you expect the emotions and the mentality of this team to be heading into next week's regional?

PETE DERKAY: Can you say that again? I'm sorry.

Q. It seems like the MO of this team has been to bounce back after a loss like today. What do you think the mentality of this team will be like heading into next week's regional?

PETE DERKAY: Just take it one game at a time. It would have been nice to win today, but it's done and over with. Now our sights are set on that particular regional, and we're going to take it one game at a time and give it our best shot.

Q. You just said it's already over and you've got to flush this one out. Do you think as a team you all are going to do that pretty quickly? I know bus rides back after a loss on Sunday are never really fun, but with so much to play for so soon, does the switch need to flip kind of quickly on this one?

PETE DERKAY: I think so. I think our team is really good at doing that when just the entire season, after a loss, we bounce back right away. We kind of flush it immediately. You can kind of have five, ten minutes to really reflect on what just happened, but it's always flip the switch and let's get going to the next thing.

Q. Going forward, what would it mean for this program to host a regional and kind of have that be something -- I don't think you've had one since 2005 at Lindsey Nelson. What would that mean?

PETE DERKAY: It would mean everything. Just to see how far this program's come in my time here, it's something that's going to be very special for me to experience, and it's just something that two years ago, I mean, we were very happy with making a regional for the first time in so long, but we always knew there was more. Honestly, if we had done a little better in some games, we could have been hosting that year.

So we went on the road for that regional, and now it was just kind of motivation to get back home for one and let this fan base come out and be that extra motivation that we need going forward.

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