

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Matt Hobbs

Chris Lanzilli

Postgame Press Conference



Alabama 4, Arkansas 3

MATT HOBBS: I think that the game really comes down to the first couple innings of the game. We didn't really get off to a good start on the mound, didn't really pitch all that well to begin the game. Thought we threw the ball well at the end of the game. We didn't play very good defense at the beginning of the game, and they took advantage. You've got to give a heck of a lot to credit to Coach Bohannon and those guys over there with Alabama. Thought they did a really good job. They played clean baseball, their pitchers threw strikes, and they took advantage of our mistakes early to get out to a pretty decent lead. And it's -- obviously when you're facing a good team, it's tough to come back.

Q. Your defense has been a strength all year; can you put your finger on what's happened? Last weekend in Tuscaloosa some of the same stuff.

MATT HOBBS: Yeah, I think it's just one of those things that you're going to go through ups and downs either on the mound, at the plate, or defensively throughout the season. And it's unfortunate that it's happening right now. I don't think that's something that will continue with our team. I do think the defense is just too good for that to happen.

We've made mistakes in big spots, and I think that's one of those things that it shows up because you expect it to be so good because it has been so good. And we have a heck of a lot of confidence in our defense, and I do believe that it's like anything, we're in a little bit of a slump right now, but we will out of that.

Q. Obviously scoring, you've been scoring a lot recently off of the long ball. Do you think that you rely on the long ball too much in these tight situations, or do you think it's just something that shows up when

you kind of need it?

MATT HOBBS: I think that it's part of our offense and it's one of the things that if it has helped us win games in the past, we can't blame it on it when we lose games. I think one of the things about our offense is that it is explosive at times. And, yeah, I'm sure we'd like to string together seven or eight hits, but we get ourselves back in that game with a two-run home by Lanzilli. So we're in the game, we're in position to win the game, we're in position to put ourselves in a spot to be able to get a win because of the long ball.

I think that it is a huge part of our offense, and if we're a little bit more multiple in some of the times that we have played this season, our record is a little bit different. But that's not -- that isn't who we've been.

Q. Obviously DBH not here. Did he say anything after the game? Have you gotten a chance to speak to him yet? Is he all right?

MATT HOBBS: I haven't got any updates on his current condition. I have not talked to him since the end of the game, though, no.

Q. Your bullpen really kept you in the game, and obviously didn't work out in the end, but how good was it to see some of those guys kind of bounce back after the last couple games last week?

MATT HOBBS: Yeah, I think the last couple games can really leave a sour taste in your mouth if you're those guys because they have been so good for us this season. And I was very proud of the way -- especially Kole Ramage and Evan Taylor. If you really look at all of Ramage's last outings, he took the ball out three days in a row over the weekend, really just kind of gutted out the last one. The stat line doesn't look very good for Kole on that particular one on Saturday, but if you look at heart, soul and guts, you're pretty proud of that kid.

And then Evan Taylor has been good for us all season. And Zack was little bit up-and-down today. His command wasn't very good today, but he's been great for us

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throughout the season, also. Proud of those guys to be able to keep the game close, keep it manageable, and give us a chance to win there at the end.

Q. The decision to go with Will McEntire to start and then just moving forward, who do you think you're going to start in the next game, and how do you feel about Will today?

MATT HOBBS: I didn't think Will threw the ball all that well today. Obviously not indicative of how well he's been throwing the ball for -- really over the course of the season for us. It's an outing that is one outing throughout the course of the season, and we expect Will to be able to help us possibly later in this tournament and definitely next week going forward.

As far as the decision to -- who to start tomorrow, we'll discuss that as a staff and then we'll announce that later. We haven't come up with that yet.

Q. Some of their runs, you had a rundown between second and third, they were just being a little aggressive, and they showed some of that last weekend, too. Can you maybe speak to the style of play they're using against you guys?

MATT HOBBS: Sure. And we knew that coming into that Alabama does play a very aggressive style of baseball. They got off I think two or three hit-and-runs last week that helped them spread out a little bit of the scores on a couple of the games. And then today they tried the hit-and-run early and swung and missed and we threw the guy out at second base.

We knew they were going to be aggressive. They've been aggressive. I think if we get the tag on that base runner, we don't have that rundown situation. That's a little unfortunate.

Kind of a goofy play there at the beginning of the game, but it speaks to what we were talking about earlier. We were not hooked up in the first four innings. It just didn't look like that at all, offensively, defensively or on the mound.

Q. Do you have any concern that it's reoccurred a couple of games now?

MATT HOBBS: I think you have some concern about it because it has come up a couple of times. Really since Vanderbilt it's happened a couple different times, and it's cost us some ballgames. Certainly something we're trying to address as a staff, and it has to be a level of concern because you're getting down to the end here, and these games -- you look at how much one run can mean in a

game, how much one, two runs can mean in a game, and today it really showed up and bit us. Hopefully it's a wake-up call for everybody.

Q. Can you talk us through your potential options, Nolan --

MATT HOBBS: You've got Wiggins, you've got Nolan, you've got Smith, you've got those three guys. It'll be probably one of those guys I imagine. I want to try to talk to Coach Van Horn tonight and then confer with the rest of the staff and just kind of see what everybody is thinking before making any kind of final decision on that.

Q. Last three games have been tough; what are the conversations like in the locker room and what's going on internally with the team and what's going on there?

CHRIS LANZILLI: Obviously disappointed with the three losses. We know we can do better. We just have a lot more talent than how we're playing. Conversations that are going on, we're just trying to build each other up and obviously recover. There's only so much you can do, but we have so much talent, and we can get there for sure. We have confidence.

Q. Is it something about Alabama, or is it because there were a couple games there that you didn't play? You're on a hot streak right now, playing really well, hitting the ball really well. What's that about?

CHRIS LANZILLI: I just feel confident at the plate and kind of just not letting anything get in my head, not thinking too much, and just playing the game. Obviously it's been more successful the past few days, and hoping to keep that up.

Q. You guys have been a strong defensive team all year. What have you seen in recent games? There hasn't been as tight of defense played.

CHRIS LANZILLI: Yeah, I mean, we normally play probably one of the best defenses, maybe the best defense in the country, and honestly I can't say we played terrible. For the average team I think we've played pretty well defensively. But we can always do better for sure.

Q. What's the mindset going forward? How do you bounce back from this?

CHRIS LANZILLI: I mean, just go out there, play hard, and make a few minor adjustments here and there and just honestly play baseball. I mean, we have guys that are unbelievable at baseball, and we need to get out of our own heads and play with confidence.

Q. You guys didn't have Coach Van Horn there today. When did you find that out and did it affect the team?

CHRIS LANZILLI: Yeah, Coach Hobbs told us right before the game. He said, don't let it affect you, Coach Van Horn doesn't want you guys thinking about it at all. He's doing well.

Obviously we'd love to have him here and he affects the game hugely, that's why he's got such a good reputation. I don't know, maybe that was a big part of it.

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