

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

**Alabama Crimson Tide**

**Coach Brad Bohannon**

**Drew Williams**

**Antoine Jean**

Postgame Press Conference



Alabama 4, Arkansas 3

BRAD BOHANNON: First thing I'll say is it was really weird looking over at the Arkansas dugout and not seeing Coach Van Horn, so I hope he's feeling better. He's one of the GOATS as far as I'm concerned. I thought it was an awesome college baseball game. Fortunately Arkansas helped us a little bit early. To our guys' credit, we took advantage of some mistakes that they made, and really the story of the game, both bullpens were just outstanding. Weren't very many hits the back half of the game and was really proud of our whole team but especially those guys that pitched after Jacob McNairy gave us a good start today.

Obviously a big win for us on so many levels and really happy for our kids and proud of them.

**Q. Drew, you told us this week how much you love playing in Hoover and everything is going well right now, it seems. What are the emotions like in the dugout and how excited are you to keep playing now that you have two losses in your pocket?**

DREW WILLIAMS: This place is awesome. I can't tell you enough how much I love to play here, man. It's just the environment, the field, the fans, everything about it. It's so much fun. Being able to lock in the first day and be able to guarantee two more days was awesome. And coming out here and winning the second one and putting yourself in good position was even better.

**Q. Drew, uniform is a little dirty; as far as you guys' ability to manufacture runs, what's kind of the mindset that you take to baserunning and trying to scrape out those runs?**

DREW WILLIAMS: Well, I don't think we're the team that can just sit up there and hit home runs all day long, so we kind of have to find a way to score runs when we can, move guys in run, steal. I'm not the best at that, but I do what I can, and at the end of the day it worked out today.

**Q. Antoine, you had one hit in two innings. Just talk about you were slowly implemented more and more as the season went on and talk about your routine. How did it feel to be out there and what went well for you?**

ANTOINE JEAN: It was my first year in Hoover. Last year I was hurt so I didn't get to pitch, which wasn't too fun. But just watching the first two games, like every situation, every tight situation as a pitcher, you want to get in, you want to pitch in those situations.

So just today when I heard my name called, I was like, it's time to go. You know what I mean?

**Q. This is the fourth game in a row you've seen Arkansas, second time you've seen McEntire as a starter. How did that help you guys seeing them for four games in a row and McEntire twice?**

DREW WILLIAMS: I mean, they're a great team. They're staff is really talented. I guess just experience, just getting to see it over and over. You get to see it 100 times, it's going to be better than if you've never seen it. Just getting to play them back to back, I guess, did help tonight.

**Q. Antoine, you made a couple starts early in the year. You went through some injuries, you had to kind of battle back. Tonight you got to pitch in two of the biggest innings of the whole season. How special was that for you?**

ANTOINE JEAN: It felt really good. Like I said earlier, I was waiting to hear my name, and once they told me to go, it was time to go. The stadium got loud, I knew it was a big situation. Usually that's what brings my game up. I hope it does, I think it does. But it just felt great to be out there, and had a lot of fun tonight for sure.

**Q. With the uncertainty around yesterday and today, how have you navigated it and how have you stayed centered through all the uncertainty?**

DREW WILLIAMS: I think that's how the game works. You've got to be able to take it day by day. You can't control anything but your next at-bat, your next pitch, your next game. That's been our mindset since day one since before we started the season. In a time like this, that's all you can do and that's what you have to do. We were ready for that.

ANTOINE JEAN: Today all the pitchers were meeting before the game, it got pushed back, getting to the field, all of that got pushed back. So I would say not trying to overthink the situation, just chill with the guys, do what you can do to get ready, and once it's time to go, it's time to go.

**Q. Coach, the theme of this team, opportunistic. Talk about how aggressive you guys are in the base paths and how you were able to manufacture some runs today and eventually gave yourself a good enough cushion where you were able to win that game by a run.**

BRAD BOHANNON: You know, we've really done more of that out of necessity than what I think our personnel is. I really thought going into the season that we would get more extra-base hits and we would be more of an offense that just strung hits together. We got in the middle of the season and that just wasn't working. I think it was Texas A&M where you start doing some things offensively where maybe the math doesn't work out as far as the pitcher's delivery time or you have a guy with a little bit of swing and miss but you roll the dice. We spent a lot of time on that stuff, the short game and baserunning, and really glad that we're doing that well right now.

**Q. Coach, you spread out five pitchers over the course of the game today. How do you feel about your staff and your bullpen over the first two games of this tournament?**

BRAD BOHANNON: Well, they've been outstanding, and I certainly don't want to take anything away from the defense or the offense, but we've pitched several guys and they've all thrown well, and that's what it takes to have success in Hoover.

We don't really have that first round draft pick, Friday night guy. We've pieced it together and it's worked for us to this point. If you pitch five guys, if one five guy has a really bad day, you can lose the game, and I thought all five guys that pitched today did a great job.

**Q. It kind of felt like one of your biggest and most emotional wins of your career at Alabama so far. Down the stretch the last couple innings you had to beat Arkansas. They weren't going to give it to you. You had to go out there and make the pitches. Was this the team you've envisioned all season long? Because there was a lot of high expectations, and now that they're getting on a roll here, is this what you've been looking for all year?**

BRAD BOHANNON: You know, the only thing you can do as a coach so you don't lose your mind is you think that things will even out over time. It's been a tough year, I don't shy away from that, especially the three weeks going into last weekend. We were in a very good position when we got to the middle of league play, and we had four weeks where we just didn't play as well as we could or should or things didn't go our way or whatever.

We're also the same team that won nine in a row. We're the same team that beat Texas A&M two out of three at home, that swept Ole Miss at Ole Miss.

Baseball is really a game of streaks, and this league is incredibly humbling. The kids roll their eyes because I'm not even one of the old guys in the league, but I say all the time, this is my 19th year being in the conference, and now that things are maybe evening out a little bit for us, maybe I have a little bit more credibility with our team.

**Q. You talked about streaks there. You guys are on a hot streak, Arkansas cold streak. I'm curious what you're seeing from the Hogs because what we get from that side is Alabama played really well. I'm curious what you see from Arkansas as to how you guys were able to beat them.**

BRAD BOHANNON: I still -- Arkansas is a really good team. They're a legitimate top 10 team. They just have too much pitching, especially at the back end of the game to not be really dangerous the next three weeks. Again, like the SEC, you just don't get this league until you're in it how good everybody is, and your margin for error is really slim.

I'm not even super familiar with their team except that last weekend and today they helped us a little bit, and we played really clean. We only walked them twice, played really good defense, really gave up two solo homers if we had locked a ball in the dirt.

You're looking at seven days as you're evaluating Arkansas. I think if you look over a 12 or 14, 15-week period, you see a legitimate team. There aren't too many teams that aren't really successful in June that have the

bullpen pieces that they do.

**Q. As far as last year, you had kind of a similar start to the tournament as this year, having a big win against Tennessee and now the big win against Arkansas. What's kind of the Hoover magic that you guys have had this postseason and last season?**

BRAD BOHANNON: You know, the year that they built our new stadium at Alabama, another team played in Hoover all year, and I've heard a lot of -- that wasn't a great experience just because of dealing with class and all that. At this point I kind of want to move all our games back to Hoover.

I wish I knew if there was something different that we were doing in Hoover that we weren't doing somewhere else. We would be doing it in February and March, as well.

The one thing that I mentioned yesterday, we do have a lot of kids that grew up coming to these games. I think every player in the SEC loves this experience and really gives it everything they have. Maybe there's something to the fact that a lot of our kids (audio interruption) something to it or maybe it's just a coincidence, who knows.

**Q. Unrelated to that, as far as the past 24 hours plus with the uncertain and the rain delays, how does that change your schedule and can you walk me through how that alters things for you guys?**

BRAD BOHANNON: You know, we joke all the time with Coach oats that hey, man, it's 07 degrees in the gym every day, some days it's 73 or 68. It's just part of our sport. When you get to this part of the year, you've dealt with a lot of uncertainty whether you want to or not.

The other part of that is every schedule change that we're dealing with, the opponent is dealing with, as well.

I think older players typically handle that better than younger players, but it's just part of -- you can't control the weather. It's part of our sport. Our kids have done a good job of staying locked in and staying loose. That's one of the reasons we've been successful the last couple days.

**Q. You made a great play in foul territory this afternoon; I was wondering if you've talked to Zane about taking over for him at third base or not?**

BRAD BOHANNON: Absolutely not. You know, usually I let those balls go by me, but it was like a one big hop and I was telling their third baseman that it got in the lights and I lost it for a second. I got really nervous for a split second. But luckily it stuck and that's probably the only play you're

going to see me make the next few days.

**Q. You talked about the composure of your team after that two-run home run. You had a near collision in the outfield and then made a good play to settle everything down, then got a couple outs. Talk about the composure of your team and how that was a turning point where the game could have gotten away from you right there.**

BRAD BOHANNON: I think that's a really good point, and we talked about that in our postgame huddle. We've been in an unbelievable amount of one-run games and have come out on the wrong side of more of those than we've won. Now maybe it's paying off a little bit that we've been in so many tight games. I think a lot of the ones that we lost in early, middle of the season were not getting it done offensively more so than on the mound. I think if you want to have success in the postseason starting with Hoover, you're going to be in tight games because everybody you're playing is really good.

I thought our kids, a lot of our guys defensively and obviously all the kids that pitched did a great job of handling the tightness that you can feel in the stadium, in the stands, and probably part of that is being in this conference and having so much experience in tight games.

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