

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Florida Gators

Coach Kevin O'Sullivan

BT Riopelle

Postgame Press Conference



Texas A&M 10, Florida 0

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Well, credit A&M. They obviously played very well. Their starting pitcher did a real nice job, kept us off balance. But with that being said, we just didn't play very well in all phases. We didn't swing the bats very well. We had a poor approach. I think we struck out five of the first nine at-bats, and I think we struck out I think 11 times overall.

Our approach wasn't very good, and on the pitching side of things, we pitched behind the count an awful lot tonight. Hard for us to get into a flow of the game. I thought the pace was pretty slow to start the ballgame, and we've got some young pitchers that got into a lot of 2-0, 3-1 counts, and obviously A&M took advantage of those counts.

Credit them; somehow we've got to put this one behind us and get ready to play tomorrow.

Q. BT, in a game like this, what are the things that you think contribute to this kind of a performance? Is it just you guys all kind of struggling at the same time? Is it harder to see the ball? That was something that South Carolina talked about yesterday. What was it for you guys?

BT RIOPELLE: Well, I think that's just the game of baseball sometimes. You just don't have it some days. You have it all together the next day. You've just got to put it together when you can. Today we were all kind of off is how it seemed like. I think our play spoke for itself, but like Sully said, we'll just have to come back tomorrow and put our best at-bats together, put our best pitches together and put together a win.

Q. BT, offensively what do you think specifically the team can do a bit better tomorrow?

BT RIOPELLE: Well, like Sully said, credit A&M. Their starting guy mixed us up pretty well. He threw two pitches, really spun his slider pretty well on all counts when -- and that was as good as he pitched. We just weren't on it today. Tomorrow we've just got to get back to Florida baseball, what we know how to play, and go from there.

Q. What did you see from Neely behind the plate today?

BT RIOPELLE: Neely just didn't have his stuff today. He battled as best he could, I think. But that happens sometimes in baseball where you just don't have your stuff; you didn't feel it. But there's no excuses. I could have called a little bit better pitches, we could have played a little bit better defense behind him, we could have put up some more runs to give him a little bit more leeway pitching on the mound. It's a collective effort, not just Neely.

Q. Coach, how much of a learning experience do you think today was for some of those freshman arms that were out there like you mentioned?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Well, honestly, we're at the latter part of the season. They're not freshmen anymore. They've had a lot of experience. We played a 30-game schedule in our league. We played on the road. We played three against Miami, three against Florida State. We played a really good schedule.

At this point I wouldn't use that as an excuse. They're seasoned enough, they're talented enough. When you pitch behind a count like we did today against a talented lineup, these things are going to happen. We've just got to pitch a little bit better, quite honestly.

Q. What are you telling the younger guys after a game like this, because this is still the first time that they're going to have to go into an elimination game. From a pressure standpoint, what's the message after a game like this to the team?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Not a whole lot to say. We were not very good in all phases, honestly. We got beat handily



today, it's just that simple. But there's no pressure into tomorrow. We've just got to play better, simple as that. You can't really control the outcome of the game but you can control how you play and pitch.

We'll get Nick Pogue on the mound tomorrow. He's worked awfully hard to come back from Tommy John. Maybe we use that as motivation, but we've really got to be concerned about ourselves. Like I said, it's a collective group. We just got beat soundly today, like I said, and we just didn't make any adjustments at the plate. But sometimes you've got to credit the other team, too, and he obviously threw the ball really well.

We'll just bounce back tomorrow.

Q. Obviously Jud has been struggling; do you look for bright spots? That at-bat he had with two on, got to a 3-2 count, battled, eventually rolled one over to the third baseman. Did you see anything in that at-bat that was encouraging?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, one of the things about a quality at-bat is -- you know, Chuck who puts together the quality at-bats, one of the things is seven pitches or more.

We're doing the best we can to get these guys going, but it's just not on Jud. The last two games we have not swung the bat very well. But like I said, we faced two pretty good starters the last couple of times out, so it's not going to be any easier tomorrow. Because I don't know who they're going to throw, but they've obviously got a talented pitching staff. We're just going to have to be better, simple as that.

Q. Not to make any excuses, but how much does the rain delay and the scheduling of things, how much does that affect you guys when you go out there today? You're expecting to play yesterday, you don't. You're expecting to play this morning and you don't. How much of a problem does that become?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: No, I don't see -- both teams are presented with the same scenarios. You would think a day off yesterday would probably help us. But both teams had to go through the same thing about not playing last night and then not playing this morning, and get a call from Herb saying you guys got to be ready to go at 2:30, and we ended up starting at 2:45, but it's the same for both teams. I don't see that as an excuse at all in any way, shape or form.

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