

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Friday, May 27, 2022

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Florida Gators

## Coach Kevin O'Sullivan

## Colby Halter

## Jac Caglianone

### Postgame Press Conference



Florida 7, Arkansas 5

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I thought we were much better today offensively than yesterday, obviously, but we got a lot of production from a lot of different guys in the lineup, which was good to see, and tried to use the short game a little bit more today to kind of get a little bit more offense going. Nick Pogue was really good, gave us another quality start. Blake came in for an inning and then obviously we stretched out Ryan there at the end and did a real nice job.

Credit Arkansas, they battled right there until the end and were one hit away from getting the tying run to the plate.

Looking forward to playing tomorrow and hopefully playing a little bit better.

**Q. Colby, after Arkansas scored the two runs at the top of the sixth, how important was it to get two runs right back in the bottom of the sixth?**

COLBY HALTER: We always talk about that as a team. Just picking each other up. When they go out and score, we want to help our pitcher out as an offense and go out and score and give him the confidence back to keep throwing strikes and stuff like that. It's really important.

**Q. Colby, just a couple days ago we talked to you about you struggling at the late and kind of staying with it, and today you had a really explosive day. To put together the performance you did, what does that do for you personally?**

COLBY HALTER: It's obviously a confidence builder for sure, but like I said the other day, I'm just trying to be a good teammate every single day and bring my defense

and the stuff at the plate will come. I know what type of player I am, so it's good.

**Q. For both guys, how good was it to see Jud swing the bat the way he did today and produce the way he did today?**

JAC CAGLIANONE: It was great. Everybody knows Jud is a great hitter, so seeing him piece balls together like that today is awesome.

COLBY HALTER: Yeah, no doubt. It's good for the team, and Jud is a great guy, so it was good to see it for him, too.

**Q. For both of you guys, second time you've seen Connor Noland this season, first time it seems like he got the better of you guys. This time you got to him. How did you feel and what were you seeing from him today?**

COLBY HALTER: Sure, he's a good pitcher, no doubt he's got a really good slider. But kind of our game plan was just see the ball up a little bit and try to take advantage of mistakes. You definitely learn from seeing a guy one time earlier in the season, but yeah.

JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, that was my first time facing him and everything like that. But listening to what Chuck had to say and following what these guys were doing, that was a big help throughout today.

**Q. This was significantly improved offensive performance compared to the last two games. What was the conversation like going into the contest and how does it feel to be able to get back on track offensively?**

COLBY HALTER: We know offense, we know what we can do at the plate. We've got a bunch of really good bats in the lineup, and baseball is a game you can't overcook it. We've been pretty consistent all year at the plate, and we obviously had two games we didn't score a ton of runs, but we didn't freak out or anything, and kind of just got back to ourselves today.



JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, just our approaches and everything like that. We were really working on going at-bat, for every at-bat, making changes when needed.

**Q. How much can it help when Coach moves the lineup around a little bit? Can it give you kind of a fresh start going into a game?**

COLBY HALTER: Sure, I mean, I think a little bit. Sully is pushing the right buttons sometimes, and yeah, things like that always work out, I guess.

JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, I think Colby hit that one pretty much on the head.

**Q. Kevin, what was your thought process in shaking up the lineup a little bit today, and you have to feel good obviously that it seemed to help?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, I think maybe just take a little pressure off and maybe moving somebody down just a couple spots, moving somebody up a couple spots may make a difference, but sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't, but today maybe took a little pressure off some of the hitters, and obviously our approach was better today than it was yesterday.

**Q. What does a performance like this do for you guys after, like you said, it was slower offensively for the first two games and then to kind of break out this way?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, I think we saw similar pitchers from yesterday and today. Both guys have good breaking balls, and yesterday obviously we didn't see the ball up and we chased an awful lot, but today I thought we stayed in our legs better and had some better at-bats.

But they're both similar. They have to rely on their breaking ball, so I thought today was much better obviously than yesterday.

**Q. It's been a while since you guys saw Arkansas in Gainesville. Seems like they're a different team now, they're on a really cold streak. I'm curious what you saw from Arkansas today. They're struggling a lot. From your perspective what are you thinking?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I mean, quite honestly, I think everybody goes through stretches, and they don't play their best baseball. I've known Dave for an awfully long time, obviously, and I would expect them to play their best baseball next weekend.

I don't think there's any reason for concern. We all go through it. It's not any different. You just go home and

regroup. You go back and look at last year, Mississippi State did not play their best baseball here and they go on to win the national championship.

You've just got to regroup and they've got a really good team. They've got a long lineup. They've got good pitching. They have an older bullpen for the most part. Dave will have those guys ready to play next weekend.

**Q. Coach, looking ahead to tomorrow, regardless of who you play, using Pogue today, do you have any starters in mind for tomorrow's game?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: No, we haven't really discussed it yet. You kind of catch yourself in the ninth there trying to think, okay, if we win this one, who's going to start tomorrow, but then you've got to kind of reel yourself back in because obviously we were one batter away from the tying run coming to the plate, so we really haven't given it a whole lot of thought quite yet.

**Q. Could you expand on Pogue's effectiveness, what he was doing, and did you roll him out there in the sixth, third time through, just to see how much more we can get out of him here?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, I mean, I thought he was throwing the ball really good. Obviously they ran his pitch count up a little bit. I think he got to about 80 pitches through five. But he really pitched to both sides of the plate with his fastball today. I thought his changeup was outstanding to both left-handers and right-handers, and that's kind of the equalizer for him against right-handers. You don't see many right-handed pitchers that have the ability to throw right-on-right changeups.

Slider was good enough, just to throw it just enough to keep them off balance. But he battled, and you've got to remember, he's somebody coming off Tommy John. He's only been 15 months out. He's not at full strength yet. His velocity will come back as time goes on. But he really, really pitched really well today.

**Q. This may be a better question for Jud, but I'm curious, how have you seen his two-strike approach come along since last summer?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: He's been really good for a big part of the year. I got asked that question quite a bit throughout the year, that his strikeout-to-walk ratio had improved immensely. He just got into a little bit of a situation where he's had a couple weeks where he struggled a little bit.

But my message to him would be, he just came off a day where you've got two hits, looked a lot more comfortable at

the plate, and build off of that. Try to stay as positive as he possibly can.

But he's been really good for a good part of the year, like I said, and he's made tremendous strides that way. Like I said, it's just been a tough couple weeks for him. But it was good to see him get a couple hits today.

**Q. What do you think contributed to that performance today?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I don't know quite honestly. I mean, he didn't miss a couple breaking balls were up in the zone, and he stayed in his legs. He swung at strikes and took balls. For the most part it's really that simple. But he got so pitches to handle up in the zone and kept the ball fair. I think yesterday all of our guys were pulling balls foul and not staying in the middle of the field, but he hit two balls, kept them fair and hit them hard.

**Q. The first couple of days pitching really dominated, game in, game out, and we've seen the bats really start to wake up. I know every game is different, every at-bat is different. Is there a common thread there, like we're seeing balls fly out of the park, we're seeing a lot more runs scored?**

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, I think it's like Sundays in our league. You get to the third starter and maybe the bullpens are not as deep, and you'll probably see some more high-scoring games today and tomorrow. You know, this league is really tough on Fridays and Saturdays, and even now on Sundays there's a lot of depth, but there's been some injuries in our league on the mound especially.

But we're not different than anybody else. Ryan obviously got extended today, so he won't be available for the rest of the weekend, so now you've got to go to guys that may not have pitched as much or freshmen that this is a big stage for them. So I think it's a matter of getting to your third or fourth starter and maybe you're starting your midweek pitcher and your bullpen is not quite as deep, you don't have your closer, like for us at the don't have Ryan at the end of the game now so somebody else is going to have to step up.

I would imagine that there's going to be some more high-scoring games as we move along in the tournament for sure.

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