

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Saturday, May 28, 2022

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

LSU Tigers

Jay Johnson

Tyler McManus

Postgame Press Conference



Kentucky 7, LSU 2

JAY JOHNSON: You know, excited to move on to the NCAA Tournament. Proud of our team for putting ourselves well in the field. Good overall season. Didn't play well today. We'll be ready to go next Friday.

Q. What was working so well for him that kind of kept y'all off balance all game?

TYLER McMANUS: I think they had a good game plan. He mixed speeds, changes pitches. Really attacked the strike zone, got ahead of a lot of hitters, kept us off balance. He went out there and pitched well. I think we could have taken a better approach to that and shown up ready to play a little bit better.

Q. Tyler, do you think there was a lack of energy due to the quick turnaround from last night?

TYLER McMANUS: No, I don't think so. I think we woke up this morning ready to go. Got to the ballpark, did our normal routine just like every Sunday when we play at 1:00. We were ready to go. I think we just didn't show up on the field like we wanted to.

Q. Seemed like Boseman worked quick, efficient innings, not a lot of pitches most of the time. Did that have anything to do with them getting off the field quick, you guys staying out there for a decent amount of time?

TYLER McMANUS: No, I don't think so. I think they just pitched better than we pitched. They hit better than we hit. You could see it in the line score. They played a good game, and props to them. We just have to be better out there.

Q. Jay, after today, do you think that the committee has changed their mind about you guys hosting?

JAY JOHNSON: I don't know that they'd made up their mind, so it's hard to answer that. I think we're very deserving of it. There's plenty of highlights on that resume. I think I'm assuming Kentucky, who in my opinion should be in the NCAA Tournament, also, that's 31 Quad 1 games. I think we've only played like 58. That's a pretty good schedule, obviously.

We swept the defending national champion on the road, we kept the College World Series runner up from last year on the road. We beat Florida two out of three on the road, beat Georgia two out of three. We went 20-5 non-conference.

When you look at the meat of that, it's hard to argue in that regard. Then we have the best hitter in the SEC. He hit .400 in SEC play, has missed 10 games. He'll be fine, he'll be ready to go. Cade Doughty will be 100 percent healthy.

To even come here and win a game and have a chance against the clear-cut No. 1 team in the country last night and make it a competitive game, there's some positive takeaways. I'm not pleased with today, but it's time to move on, and we'll either -- I'm sure they announce tomorrow, so we'll either get ready to play at home or we'll get ready to get on a bus or a plane on Wednesday and go to work.

The good thing for us is I think we were 26-8 or 26-9 at home so we can play well at home. We were 10-5 on the road in the SEC against Florida, Arkansas, Vanderbilt, Mississippi State and Alabama.

I think our team has proven that we can do well in either environment. I think we're a worthy host, but there's only 16 of those, and we'll see.

Q. Do you think it was just one of those days for you guys?

JAY JOHNSON: I just don't think we played well. We didn't get a good start, clearly, from the mound. And then credit Bose ma. He just did a nice job. We've handled



pitchers like him throughout the SEC schedule. I actually prefer seeing left-handers at this point in time with how we've done there.

But you know, like I said, you're taking out the equivalent of Joe Burrow on the LSU football team a couple years ago in terms of our lineup, and then you might as well be taking out Ja'Marr Chase or Jefferson. That's what Cade Doughty is. It's going to have a little bit of an impact. We're never going to make excuses. I fully expected to play deep into this tournament without those guys.

It is what it is. I think referencing your question a little bit more, too, I think they're smart people. There's definitely baseball people on the NCAA selection committee that know the deal. If you were here Thursday night, again, I think Kentucky is an NCAA caliber team to put up 11 runs and be moving the offense the way that we were without those guys. I'd be going like, wow, especially knowing that they're going to be healthy, and against Dollander we hit some balls hard. We competed in that game really well last night, didn't play well tonight, and I think when you play 31 Quad 1 games, they have good players. They're really well coached. They're trying to win, too. They're playing for their life. They might be playing their way into the field right now.

I think it's going to happen. With that being said, for sure wanted to play better.

Q. What did you make of your pitching game today? You started off with Hasty. I know you thought about starting him last week against Vanderbilt.

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, he did not have his best stuff, obviously. He walked three guys in a row. The story of his rise on our pitching staff has been how he's commanded the baseball. I mean, nerves. It's the first time we've started him. He's come in in the first inning twice against Ole Miss and Alabama. But it's a big environment and I'm glad we got a chance to do that here because he may need to do it next week. He may need to do it in a super regional or the College World Series with that schedule being condensed the way it will be this year with less off-days.

Tough for him, but he's one of the reasons we're 38-20, low 20s RPI and a great NCAA Tournament resume. I expect Jacob to be better next weekend, same with Eric, same with the rest of our pitching staff.

This is a grinder after going through a 30-game SEC schedule to come here and face teams that are all fighting for something. When you look at A & M and Tennessee, obviously Tennessee is sum planted as the national seed.

We're trying to host, Auburn is trying to host. They left like three days ago. Kentucky and Alabama are fighting for their lives, talented players, teams with a lot to play for. This is a tough deal. I'm glad we got a chance to do it. We'll be better next weekend because of this experience here.

Q. Should you have to go on the road for a regional, do you think more specifically talking about last night, from an environment standpoint, there's a lot of guys that have never experienced a postseason atmosphere. Do you think last night, maybe a little bit today helped that --

JAY JOHNSON: Oh, for sure, no question about it. Thursday night and Friday night. Last night was as close to Omaha outside of Omaha that I've ever been a part of in a college baseball game. So credit to the SEC for putting this event on. From afar it's always looked awesome. Not only the competition but the venue, how it's run, this. This is like better than Ameritrade, this kind of setup at this point in time.

I think we'll be better for the experience here this week.

The only disappointment I have about this weekend, is A, Jacob and Cade, we needed to rest them so that they could be at 100 percent next week. I obviously would have liked to have changed that, and then we didn't play well today. Other than that, we're good. It's full speed ahead, whether it's at the box or whether we're getting on a bus or a plane on Wednesday.

Q. What are you going to take away from this weekend aside from the experience?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I think we need to get home tonight. I mean, we've been gone -- we left for Vanderbilt last Wednesday, so it kind of snuck up on me like it's 11 or 12 days on the road. Need to get them some rest tomorrow. We'll have an off-day tomorrow.

But I think the takeaway is I think Tennessee has got to be the clear-cut favorite to win the national title. Great players, great pitching staff.

I think there's some things we could have done better in that game, and you're right there. So it always comes back to the play, no matter who you're playing.

And then I think today we just got outside of ourselves a little bit, and can't let that happen in the NCAA Tournament. Your margin for error is small, much like when you're playing these high-level SEC teams, and then it goes quick. You just really have to stay focused. I think

that got away from us a little bit today. A little bit of a painful learning experience with today's game.

Q. Can you just, Reyzelman today, he was pretty good. Looked like he might have hit a wall. I don't know what you saw from your standpoint. Just his performance tonight?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I thought he came in and got us out of a bad situation. So that was great. Gave up a homer the next inning but I think he got a zero the inning after that, and then it kind of happened quick on him where he gave up a lead-off single and then it was ball four and then we were kind of in the middle of a tough inning and then we brought in Bryce. He's been great for us I think his last two outings at Vanderbilt and the two at Alabama were as good as he's pitched.

I think we'll be excited to get him in the game next week when a leverage situation pops up.

Q. It seemed like y'all were able to make a lot of contact at the plate but just the balls weren't falling in your favor. What do you attribute that to, and also, was rest, kind of the lack of rest between last night and now something that might come into play?

JAY JOHNSON: You know, I'll credit the pitcher. I think a pitcher like that that's mixing and changing speeds and not really giving in and really giving you a good pitch to hit, if you try to do too much or you start pressing for the result as opposed to what you need to do to take a quality at-bat, then you can really make those guys ultra successful.

Unfortunately he did a good job, and we did that today.

As far as the quick turnaround, it is what it is. I'm sure our guys wanted to win last night to play again tonight, but we're not going to -- we're going to try to suffocate excuses all the time. I don't want that to be any part of what we're doing with LSU baseball.

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