

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Georgia Bulldogs

Coach Scott Stricklin

Nolan Crisp

Postgame Press Conference



South Carolina 9, Georgia 0

Q. Nolan, early in the game, the mindset, where were you at coming into that spot?

NOLAN CRISP: Obviously this game for us is an elimination game, just trying to give our team a chance to win no matter what and just compete and throw strikes, give our team a chance to win.

Q. Tell me a little about your general experience this season with this team, kind of riding the ups and downs you guys did. Give a little bit of reflection on this season with this club.

NOLAN CRISP: Yeah, no doubt. We had a good non-conference, had some good series there. Started off really slow in non-conference, but as a team we never looked down.

We just kept fighting throughout the entire season, everybody, top to bottom. We had guys step up on the pitching staff, guys that were struggling, lineup, you name it, you guys stepped up, and nobody ever put their head down and we just fighting to the end and made it here to Hoover today and gave ourselves a chance to keep playing.

Q. Reflecting on this season, could you go into the highs and the lows, where you guys are, and where do you see the program moving forward?

SCOTT STRICKLIN: Yeah, certainly a disappointing year. We just didn't finish games. When you look at our body of work, we had a lot of opportunities to finish off some games, and in this conference you have to slam the door and get those three last outs in the 9th inning or the 10th inning or the 11th inning, whatever inning we were in.

That was where we struggled. We struggled late. But like Nolan said, I thought our kids fought really hard. They never quit. They competed every single day. They did everything we asked them to do.

You know what, when you look at it on paper, we had a bad year. That's the way I look at it. This program has a lot of expectations, and it has a lot of pride, and I didn't feel like we performed up to our expectations.

And that's on me as the head coach. That's my responsibility. I take a lot of pride in trying to uphold that expectation here at Georgia, and this year we came up short.

Q. Just the league in general, a lot of people were saying this is as good as it's ever been. How would you assess your evaluation of the 2023 sec?

SCOTT STRICKLIN: Yeah, absolutely. There's no question, and I said it last year, and I think I said it the year before that, it just keeps getting better, this league. This is where the best players come to play.

Certainly the transfer portal has made it even better, and teams have been able to stock up. It's just the talent level from top to bottom in this league, it is amazing how many great players and great teams there are, and I would agree that, yes, this is the best the league has ever been.

Q. How do you get to where you want to be, and how do you compete in this changing landscape, transfer portal, NIL, all the other things that are different than they were 16 years ago?

SCOTT STRICKLIN: Yeah, it's a new world for sure, and you've got to be able to compete on those fronts, and it's really difficult. There are some players, certainly NIL, that's a real thing. You hear about it in football all the time and you hear about it in basketball, but it's a real thing in baseball, as well.

You've got to be able to compete in the offseason. When that transfer portal opens here in a couple of days, there's

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competition. And the transfer portal and NIL, and I don't think those two things should go together, but I think we all know that they do. That's unfortunate, but that's where we are.

In order to compete at the highest level, that NIL, it's extremely important.

Q. You guys battled so many injuries throughout the year but had some resiliency. When you get to this point, is there a level of kind of immense emotional drain with this team, kind of a little more drained than you would be normally?

SCOTT STRICKLIN: I think the biggest thing that got us today was James Hicks. James was really good. When that starting pitcher is locked in and throwing strikes like he did to our right-handers, staying on top of their hands all day long, and it was a great day to pitch. Wind is blowing in, the park is playing big, so he was challenging guys with that fast ball, and he's getting in there. He did a really good job with that.

I think that was the biggest issue today, was James Hicks, and we couldn't get the hit with runners in scoring position. We had some opportunities to bring it closer, to get some momentum, and we couldn't get that done. And they were able to put some balls in play, and some of those balls that dropped in, but you've got to put it in play in order to get those hits. And I thought they did a good job of that. They played a really clean game. They played great defensively. And like I said, I thought James Hicks was the story.

Q. What are your impressions of this baseball team and if they're good enough to be in the top 16?

A. Well, I certainly think that they are, and the numbers and the logistics kind of add up to that. What the committee ends up doing, I don't know. Certainly with Noah Hall and Will Sanders, when those three guys are going -- we saw them in week 1, and that was as good a rotation as we've seen all year, and that goes -- Tennessee has a great rotation and Florida has a great rotation, Vanderbilt has a great rotation. And I thought South Carolina was every bit as good.

Certainly those injuries have been an issue. Hopefully Will Sanders can come back for them. Not sure where Noah is.

But it's a good club. They play with a lot of energy, and they're well coached. I think they've got a chance to go a long way, and yes, I think they deserve to host.

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