

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## South Carolina Gamecocks

## Coach Mark Kingston

## Ethan Petry

### Postgame Press Conference



LSU 10, South Carolina 3

**MARK KINGSTON:** For the first half of that game, it was a really good ballgame. Both teams were pitching well, playing good defense. There were no errors in that game today, and it was close.

I think when both teams had to go to the bullpen, that's when it changed. We were very inconsistent out of the bullpen. I thought the guys that came in made some big pitches, but my message to the team afterwards was it's got to be about consistency, what you can show, what you do, but you've got to do it over and over.

And I just thought their guys were a little bit better out of the bullpen, a lot better today, and I think that was the difference in the ballgame.

**Q. Ethan, seemed like you were seeing the ball really well today, a lot of good at-bats. Where has your confidence been over the last few weekends and where are you in terms of how you're feeling at the plate?**

**ETHAN PETRY:** I'm feeling pretty good right now. I've been struggling lately, and I just kept working hard and trusting my teammates around me, and just kept the course, and now I'm getting back to it and just looking forward to the next game.

**Q. Ethan, how have you kind of stayed mentally -- this is probably the first wall you've hit through the course of your freshman year. How have you stayed locked in to battle through some of that adversity?**

**ETHAN PETRY:** I experienced it during the preseason like I've told you guys many times before, but I kind of just stayed the course and stayed positive, like Kingston says,

and just kept swinging the bat, and good things started happening.

**Q. You had a homer today, a game-winning hit last Saturday. How much can putting a week together like this, coming out of a slump, help you mentally going into a regional next weekend?**

**ETHAN PETRY:** We're just staying confident, and we're just ready to get back to work.

**Q. How deflating was that inning, I think this was the fifth or sixth, when you left the bases loaded there with one out?**

**ETHAN PETRY:** It was pretty deflating, but stuff happens like that in baseball. We had plenty of other innings to score, just the fifth inning isn't the only inning to score.

**Q. You guys were really good with runners on and runners in scoring position yesterday, not so great today. Was there a different at-bat? Were you guys taking different at-bats, or was it just their pitchers making pitches at the right time?**

**ETHAN PETRY:** Yeah, it's more their pitchers making pitches. They've got elite pitchers, and they just made pitches, and we tried to do too much with them, and this just happens.

**Q. What happened with Cole there in the second inning, and how is he doing?**

**MARK KINGSTON:** Yeah, he got a foul tip, and it jolted him a little bit, so he is in a concussion protocol. So we'll have to evaluate that day-to-day. As a Dolphins fan, I'm pretty familiar with that, so we'll hope for the best.

**Q. Just for clarity, was he diagnosed with a concussion or --**

**MARK KINGSTON:** I want to hear it officially from the doctor, but talking to the athletic trainer, that is the impression I was given, so we took the safe route to get him out of the game.



**Q. What went into the decision to start Eli today, and how did you think he performed on short rest?**

MARK KINGSTON: I thought he did fine. He gave us four innings on less than 70 pitches. Our target in terms of number of pitches for him was going to be 60 to 70. We were in the ballgame, and that's what we asked, and who we used after him was going to be dependent on the pace of the game and the score of the game. It just didn't work out great after he came out of the game, but I thought he gave us a chance to win with how he pitched.

**Q. Along those lines, do you have a sense of who might be available tomorrow, who could go for you guys starting-wise?**

MARK KINGSTON: Well, are you a lefty or a righty?

**Q. I'm a righty.**

MARK KINGSTON: Okay, you're on the list. Do we have any lefties out there?

No, we'll go back to the hotel. We'll look at the guys, again, that we think are capable and available, and we'll come up with something later on.

**Q. Was there any thought to maybe starting Proctor in that fifth inning, and what did you see from him that he didn't seem to have today?**

MARK KINGSTON: No, again, we wanted to get Eli to a certain spot. We knew that against that team, that's a very good offensive team, clearly, and they grind you out. So you've got to look at what's in front of you in that inning, but you've also got to look at how many outs you still have left to get in that ballgame.

Because of that, we just felt like tried to get a little bit more out of Eli within his pitch count, and then we'll hand the ball to Proctor.

Proctor has been tremendous for us all year. Just didn't have it today. For whatever reason, just he wasn't throwing with the command that he usually does. It's going to happen at times. Hasn't happened very often for him, but it did today.

Again, it's just one of those things. I think the decisions were made were right, but it's just sometimes it doesn't work out.

**Q. You mentioned looking for more consistency. Obviously beyond just results, nine runs yesterday,**

**three today. What are your signs of consistency for this team maybe beyond just the scores going into the regionals? What are you looking to establish going into next weekend?**

MARK KINGSTON: We know what we look like when we're playing at our best. We get good starting pitching, and then the guys that come in behind our starting pitchers give us strikes and allow the defense to work. We know what that looks like.

Offensively, again, we faced a guy with a really good arm today, and you've got to tip your cap sometimes. But we need length in our lineup. We need guys that are taking quality at-bats, and we've done that some as of late but not as much as we need to.

But the defense, we've made all the routine plays. Again, I'd like to see us make some of those more impactful plays that can change the momentum of innings, but we are making all the routine plays right now, but it's just a matter of putting it all together. I mean, that's what it comes down to.

**Q. Did you sense any deflation after you load the bases there and Gavin strikes out, Will grounds out?**

MARK KINGSTON: No, deflation is much too strong a word for a bunch of 18- to 22-year-olds in the middle of an inning, in the middle of a game.

Do they get frustrated? Yeah. Do they feel like it's a lost opportunity? Of course they do. Everybody does. But deflation means you're about ready to give up, and this team never gets that.

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