

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Thatcher Hurd

Brayden Jobert

Postgame Press Conference



LSU 10, South Carolina 3

JAY JOHNSON: Really good performance by our team. It starts with Thatcher. Great start. Had command of all his pitches. Really got himself reset when he got into any type of trouble, whether it was the count or runners on base, and he did a terrific job, very clean game defensively, and when your pitcher pitches like that, it makes it much easier to do that.

Really good performance by Nate out of the bullpen, and then offensively we did a little bit of everything we do pretty well today.

Q. Thatcher, what was working today? And also I noticed that you were wearing Paul Skenes' glove. What goes into that? Was it a little good luck or what was that?

THATCHER HURD: Yeah, I thought I was able to command the fastball. I was trying to go right at them, throw it right over the white. Best way to do it.

And my glove broke the other day, so I've been using Paul's hand-me-down. And it's got good mojo, so I'm going to keep rolling with it.

Q. Thatcher, what happened to your glove?

THATCHER HURD: When you catch enough balls and you play catch with Paul Skenes, he tends to break them.

Q. Brayden, what was your approach today, especially with that home run?

BRAYDEN JOBERT: Yeah, just to try and hit low line

drives and hit my pitch. I've been trying to walk more and take more pitches, so understand we're disciplined at the plate and putting good swings on balls that are in my zone.

Q. Thatcher, against South Carolina's lineup, what was the game plan heading into today?

THATCHER HURD: Just attack the zone with my stuff, everything with full conviction, get ahead. At times I could have done better at getting ahead and not being too fine. But you build off every outing, and so we'll continue to attack the strike zone and keep going.

Q. Thatcher, is this a confidence boost for you, especially about to head into postseason ball in the NCAA tournament?

THATCHER HURD: I've always been confident. It's just about surrendering the results to the process and just build off every outing. You can learn a lot from failure, and you learn from success. So keep building off it. But I've always been confident.

Q. Thatcher, what about the job Nate did on the back half to shut things down?

THATCHER HURD: That's what he does. He came in, suffocated the strike zone, picked me up in a big way, picked us up in a big way. That was awesome, and that's what he's done all year.

Q. Thatcher, how big do you think this was for y'all's bullpen to make a statement after all the question marks you guys have had?

THATCHER HURD: I mean, just another day, another outing. We're not looking into that.

Q. Thatcher, we didn't get to talk to you after your outing at Georgia. What role did that five innings play in kind of your success today? What did you build from that outing?

THATCHER HURD: Yeah, get ahead. The process is simple. You get strike one, you get the lead-off guy out,



and then you're pretty liberated to expand with your pitches and opens up a lot of opportunities for you. So that's the plan, and just staying true to the process right there.

Q. Thatcher, one more question about the glove. Are you going to continue wearing his glove the rest of the season, or are you going to get a new one?

THATCHER HURD: Probably keep wearing Paul's glove.

Q. Did you give it back to him right after your outing?

THATCHER HURD: He's got a couple gloves, so it's kind of a hand-me-down. And he broke it playing catch, so I guess it's fair enough that I get to use his other glove.

Q. Early in the game, Dylan almost hit one out, Tre' almost hit one out. You kind of broke the seal on that. What did it mean to put you guys on the board and offensively as a whole today? Seems like scoring 10 runs is a good day.

BRAYDEN JOBERT: Yeah, I feel like we were firing on all cylinders today. That just happened to be the start of it. We have amazing players 1 through 9. So if I'm in the 8 hole and Dylan is leading off, I still feel like I'm going to hit.

I've never been on a team that it's been like that. We have amazing players 1 through 9, and if we just play our ball, we feel like nobody can handle us.

Q. Was it difficult to prepare today at all when the game was at 9:30 a.m.?

THATCHER HURD: No.

Q. Brayden, I know that your plate discipline has been a focus this season, and I think you're batting over .300 in SEC play. What goes into building that plate discipline and making it better this year?

BRAYDEN JOBERT: I would say -- well, I got LASIK in the offseason, so that is a huge, huge part of it. Yeah, I didn't have very good eyes last year. That was obviously a problem. That was a huge difference for me.

You know, just really honing in on like my zone and getting my pitch and understanding the strike zone, understanding what I can hit and what I can't hit.

Last year I felt like I put swings on a lot of balls that I couldn't do damage on, and this year it's just really focusing on hitting my pitch and just taking the rest.

Q. Thatcher doing what he did, Georgia started today,

obviously you can use him as a starter or reliever, but as the NCAA approaches you wouldn't mind handing him the ball in a start somewhere?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, absolutely. I think he's 5-2, and he has three saves. So he's been a part of eight wins in the decision. I think it's shortsighted to not look at the success that he's had, and we put him in and left him in at Georgia because he had the stuff to get us through a really good lineup. That's a really good lineup that was scoring a lot of runs early.

He's executing at a high level. And when you've got a guy like Paul doing what Paul's doing, it can distract a little bit, but he's had a great season, and looking forward to more out of that from him.

Q. How do you approach pitching? This tournament you have the potential to play a lot of games, but you have more games next week. How do you find that balance?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, we have a plan going into it what we're going to do. Wes and I met Monday and talked about how we want to line it up. We feel good about that plan. You want to win every game that you play. I feel like the competitive element is how Coach Bertman built the program, and there's bigger games that are coming than the ones that we're playing here. But we're going to focus on this for right now and do it in a way that's going to benefit us in the NCAA tournament.

But yeah, it is what it is. This is the best event in amateur baseball outside the NCAA tournament, and we want to play well, want to pitch well. I'll be the one that will be kind of mindful of what we need to do, how we need to do it, pitch counts, what days guys pitch, all those sorts of things, and we feel like we have a really good plan.

Q. Going off of that count, you also said that this kind of prepares you guys for next week. In day one with Thatcher and then Nate's performances, is this kind of like everything you wanted to see?

JAY JOHNSON: It was a good day from the mound. Again, those guys don't have to be perfect. In my opinion we have the best offense in the country, and it's been wire to wire -- we were up on the ESPN deal and they threw up a graphic of how many times we've scored 10 runs.

And you think about doing that, playing an SEC schedule, it's really remarkable and just speaks to the group of position players that we have and their consistency in taking really good at-bats. Really it's just about execution from the mound.

We've had a couple really tough games that really stand out in terms of struggles at the back end of the game or giving up leads and those types of things, but I think if you look at the totality of it, today is not a surprise. He threw five shut-out innings at Texas. He's had really good starts along the way. I don't remember who we were playing, it was like Samford or Butler. He looked like a Major Leaguer that night last Thursday against Georgia, executed at a really high level.

So I have a lot of confidence in him, and that's why we've continued to pitch him.

With Nate, we didn't have him for a while. I think he's pitched in -- all the games he's pitched in, we've only lost one time when he's pitched. So he's a key part of the staff.

I was really proud of him and how he executed today.

Q. I think it was the sixth inning, bases loaded, just one out, South Carolina had, and then Nate got out of it, and I was going to ask about Nate in the back half and how he did.

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, that was a key point in the game. Our magic-moment deal that we have, I thought there was three of them. I thought it was Thatcher's pitch-to-pitch execution, Brayden's home run, obviously, but one out, bases loaded right there after we walked in the third run, it's 6-3, tying run is on base, for him to have poise and execute and get a strikeout on a weak comebacker, that's the type of thing where you win in playoff baseball.

It was really great to see him deliver, and then I thought he got stronger as the game went along. He was fresh. He was ready today. And I mentioned that plan that we had coming into the week. Using him today was a big part of that, and really proud of how Nate performed.

Q. You continue to have Dylan Crews batting in the lead-off position. I was wondering why that is and what went into that. And then Tre' Morgan started at first base today for the first time, I think, since March of SEC play. If you could elaborate on that?

JAY JOHNSON: I mean, I really don't want to, but Dylan is the best player in the country. I only have him for 12 to 15 more games, so I just want to get him up as many times as I can while I have him. Just kidding, kind of, on that one.

Then with -- what was the second question? Tre' at first. He hasn't been able to play first base for an extended period of time because of some things going on. He's able to do that now, and that's a good thing for our team.

Q. Pitching plans for tomorrow, are we going to see Paul?

JAY JOHNSON: I think you would want to come to the game tomorrow. No, we want to see who we're playing, and that factors into it. Next week factors into it. We have a good idea of what we're going to do, and excited to get to tomorrow's game with getting this one under our belt.

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