

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Friday, May 26, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Alabama Crimson Tide

Coach Jason Jackson

Jim Jarvis

Postgame Press Conference



Vanderbilt 9, Alabama 2

JASON JACKSON: First of all, great job by Vanderbilt. They did a great job tonight, came out and jumped on us early, and Jacob had a rough first. He's been one of the best pitchers in this league for the last month, and he's given us some really great outings down the stretch here, and tonight in the first they got to him, and he settled in, threw up some zeros, and then I guess the big thing was just the big innings tonight got us. I thought we had some good at-bats. We hit some balls hard, hit some balls hard right at guys. Just couldn't ever get much going offensively. Again, you've got to give them credit; they did a good job, as well.

But you know, just kind of the way it went tonight.

Q. Scary moment there earlier. Are you doing okay? What was that scary at-bat for you like? Are you doing all right?

JIM JARVIS: I'm good, yeah. The Easton helmets are protecting me up there, so we're all good. I think it was just a precautionary thing for me to come out for a little bit, so yeah.

Q. Obviously not the result you wanted tonight, but it seems like the mood on the team has been better over the last couple weeks. What do you think has contributed to that and what's led to the overall success?

JIM JARVIS: I think everyone is just trying to have fun. We're playing pretty good baseball, which helps the mood, and I think our regional hosting chances go up, like everyone is kind of dying for postseason, so obviously we wanted to win tonight, but we've still got a long season ahead of us. Everyone is kind of looking forward to that

now.

Q. Piggy-backing off that, what are you looking forward to most about the regionals coming up? Like you said, just playing good baseball right now; what are you looking forward to most?

JIM JARVIS: It's kind of a different feeling than I've in the past because the past two years we were kind of on the bubble, a little bit scary. Right now it's a little bit more confident.

We know we're going to have baseball, which is really, really exciting, because that's what everyone wants, and I think everyone is just really excited to get back home, watch the selection show and then see where we're at.

Q. You and Drew both came in at a similar time when not-so-good baseball was going on in Tuscaloosa, and you fast forward four years later and you guys win 40 games for the first time since 2010. What has it meant to you this season to see everything come full circle?

JIM JARVIS: It's awesome. Like this season has been just an incredible journey. All the guys on the team are just really, really special.

When I decided to come back this year and got to come back in the fall and see all the guys that I'd been with for my entire time here and then all the new guys coming in and everyone was really excited to get the season going and everyone was really driven, there was just a lot of good things and good pieces on this team that made everything -- even like the downs this year, it's all been really fun. Like you get back on the bus even after a tough loss like tonight, and just my guys. We're going to have fun. It's a special team.

Q. What would you say is the big thing that you really learned about this team during this first part of the postseason this week?

JIM JARVIS: I think it's just like the fact that a lot of people can keep their cool under pressure. There's been a lot of random times throughout the year where things don't go



our way, and you've got to bounce back from that. This SEC tournament was incredible for us, like especially against Florida. The outcome wasn't what we wanted, but we played in front of an incredible crowd. Shout-out to Tuscaloosa loyalists. And yeah, everyone just being able to keep their mind focused and locked in on what's ahead. No one really got caught up or sped up. It was really, really a good sign for us.

Q. Jim, you mentioned you guys are going to kind of enjoy this tournament selection. You'll find out Sunday night if you're a regional host and then you'll find out Monday the rest of the field. Are you going to plan to do anything to enjoy that or watch that together?

JIM JARVIS: I'm sure we're going to do something. I don't know what it is yet. It's kind of up to J.J. a little bit.

But no, we'll do something regardless. It's going to be really fun. I'm really excited.

Q. What's it been like watching Colby this year and seeing a freshman do what he's been able to do for you guys?

JIM JARVIS: He's a machine. That guy is unreal. He just hits really impressive home runs. I don't know how. If I'm being honest, he's a freak in the weight room, too. That's kind of where it comes from. That dude is strong.

It's been really fun just watching him kind of go off. I think our entire Polaroid account is just him and Pinckney and Drew. But those photos are fun, so I hope he keeps hitting home runs.

Q. 9-2 on the scoreboard, but you had a couple opportunities, a hit there with the bases load on either of those occasions. How close do you feel this was, or maybe closer than the scoreboard would have suggested?

JIM JARVIS: I thought it was a really close game. Like Coach said before, there was like a couple -- the two innings that kind of separated it, and there was like one or two balls in those innings that if they go our way, it's a completely different game.

They found some holes and we didn't, and that's just kind of how baseball works. There's nothing you can really do about it. You're trying to hit the ball as hard as you can. They're doing the same thing. The ball just fell their way tonight.

Q. Jason, there was a few changes in the lineup.

Caden, Tommy and Gus. Can you go through those?

JASON JACKSON: Yeah, so Tommy, he's got a little -- kind of a precautionary thing. You saw yesterday we took him out with -- had a little lower body injury, so we'll get him checked out this week, but just trying to play it safe.

Caden has been kind of banged up for a little while. This is a grueling tournament. You're playing every day, and you get to day four, and we just felt like it was probably smart to make sure that we gave him a day, and we've got some things ahead of us that we want to make sure we're full strength for.

We also sat Mac and we caught Dom. Just catching four days in a row probably would have been fine; I think Caden probably could have gone. It was more just precautionary stuff. Guys get a little bit beat up, so you want to be smart about it.

Q. Without asking you to speak to the circumstances of you taking over, I would like to ask you about the challenge you've faced as an interim coach stepping in and dealing with a highly emotional situation. Had to have been some anger, some negative emotion. How do you channel that into a 10-4 run since then?

JASON JACKSON: You know, I think the message for the guys was just, guys, this doesn't affect you unless you let it. Let's just continue to stay focused on what we need to do, and you guys have a lot of good baseball in front of you. You've got everything you want to accomplish is right in front of you. You're kind of at that crossroads; like which way do you want to take it? Do you want to let it derail you and use it as an excuse, or are you going to keep doing the things that we've been doing all year? We've been playing really good baseball. Let's continue to stay in our routines. Let's continue to keep things business as usual.

And again, I go back, I've said this a million times, but it really helps to have the team that we have, a really older, mature team who did a great job handling that.

Q. We've heard from other coaches this week, guys you've played, that they're impressed with how the team looks compared to earlier in the year, and been really proud of you and the opportunity you have. What does that mean to hear from from your peers, not about the team but also about your personal accomplishments this season?

JASON JACKSON: Well, it means a lot. You've got some of the best coaches in the country and the most well-respected and guys that have accomplished a lot of great things in this league. They're all guys that I respect



tremendously, everybody in this league. They all do a great job, so to hear them say that, yeah, that definitely means a lot. I appreciate it.

Q. Not trying to jinx it or anything. It's like looking like you're going to bring a regional to Tuscaloosa for the first time in 17 years. If you needed to make some persuasion to the committee, what would your argument be to them for Sunday?

JASON JACKSON: Well, I hope that our resume speaks for itself. I don't know what our RPI is today. You guys probably know. What is it, seven or eight? 10? Okay, it was 10 to start -- so RPI of 10. What's our record against top-50 RPI teams? Is it 18-13, 18-14? I think those are pretty good things.

We were in the top 3 in the league in pitching and hitting, the only team to do that in the league. We led the league in run differential at plus 48, and I think we led the league in four or five different pitching categories.

I think the biggest thing is if you look back through history you'd see that teams that get 17, 18 wins, the track record of them hosting is pretty good, so we've history on our side kind of working in our favor.

I know it's a tough job, but I feel good about where we're at. I think our guys have done a great job, and they've earned it.

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