

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Friday, May 26, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Vanderbilt Commodores

Coach Tim Corbin

Thomas Schultz

RJ Austin

Postgame Press Conference

Vanderbilt 9, Alabama 2

TIM CORBIN: Just a good ballgame for the boys, good bounce-back from a tough ballgame last night. Hit the ball well. I thought we did a good job getting on base. We certainly pitched it well. Devan gave us a good start, and Thomas came in and gave us some length out of the bullpen, which is really needed if you're going to go deep in this thing. We live to play another day.

Q. Just from a competitive standpoint, what does it mean to you to get another shot at Florida?

THOMAS SCHULTZ: I don't know if we really look at it that way. It becomes a Florida tournament now. We've played them four times already. There might be a little bit of extra fire there, but we're not going to go in there and try and get revenge. We're going to play our game, pitch a good game, get some swings off, and see what happens.

Q. Thomas, it's kind of been a little bit of an uneven year for you, but what was it today that helped you to find success?

THOMAS SCHULTZ: I think there's a reason the season is so long. It becomes a daily process, every single day. Throughout this week, just working, tinkering on things with Brownie, just getting a mentality that's aggressive and believability in your own stuff.

Q. RJ, what do you feel like was the key? What were you doing well to jump on McNairy the way you were able to?

RJ AUSTIN: Just taking good pitches, trying to see the ball up because everything he has just tries to decelerate us,



so we just stay strong in the mind at the plate, and everybody was even touching base and everybody, we had a lot of energy in the bunker. We were believing in one another, so that was the key for success today.

Q. Tim, when you played Alabama a couple weeks ago, that was kind of the start of the run they've been going on. What do you think has led to them playing better and being a little bit of a more well-rounded team down here in Hoover?

TIM CORBIN: Well, I think certain situations with teams can bind you and allow you to insulate yourself to where you focus on your relationships, and moving forward as a team I think they've done that. I think their staff, I mentioned to J.J. at home plate how I felt like he had done a really nice job with his team from afar in terms of holding them together, playing well. They've got some good older kids on that team. I heard I think it was Williamson the other night, I heard him speak, and you can tell that those older kids have taken ownership of that team, which is really what you want this time of year.

They're a tough team. They pitch really well, and they certainly can hit.

Q. Tim, knowing the injury situation that you've been dealing with on the pitching staff, how big has it been to get so many multi-inning stints out of the bullpen and be able to get through these games using only two or three pitchers?

TIM CORBIN: It's very helpful. I think if you're going to get into a winner situation, then you have to try to get some volume out of some pitchers, and we did. We got a good start from Devan. Even last night in the loss we got a lot of volume with Bryce. I thought he threw really well. We just had one tough inning.

But outside of that, that's been good up to this point.

Some other kids are going to get an opportunity, and that's good. That's great for them. That's what this tournament does for you if you 'em tend yourself. You end up giving a guy a chance that may not have had that opportunity



during the course of the year.

Q. McNairy put together a really good start in that rubber match about 20 days ago in Tuscaloosa. What do you think was the difference tonight with your lineup?

TIM CORBIN: I think we were able to widen the zone and stay off his pitches early, and because we were getting balls, it allowed us to get in pretty good counts, and when he elevated the ball, it was almost like we could get to it because we knew what was potentially coming.

I think the last time he pitched against us, everything was running down, away. He can work on your emotions as a pitcher. He's very good. He's an older kid, really knows how to pitch. That is to me the definition of a college pitcher. It's a fastball that moves, breaking ball that moves, slider that goes into the ground, a lot of different diversions. We did a good job of bringing him up and elevating, and the first inning certainly was a big inning for us.

Q. Five hits combined for Austin and Maldonado, three walks as well. What has allowed young players like that to succeed in an atmosphere like this tonight where obviously it's a partisan crowd going the other way and just a highly charged atmosphere?

TIM CORBIN: They have had opportunities to play during the season. RJ got an opportunity to start, and we haven't really taken him out because he's a valuable piece of the infield, and he's stayed at second base and done really well, actually started off at third and then we switched him right about that Minnesota series when we went out there to second base and he's done well, so he's been in the lineup, and he's understood the trials of going through an SEC season. It's difficult because people learn how to pitch you.

Chris on the other hand worked his way into a DH role and became very steady at it, and then we took him out for a while and let him catch his breath and then got him back in tonight, and he's a very mature kid, understands the strike zone, doesn't get jumpy and takes a very deliberate approach.

I would say more than anything, if you're going to play in this league as a young kid, you have to have some maturity about you in order to handle what you're about to go through. This is a very difficult league for those kids.

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