

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Kentucky Wildcats

Coach Nick Mingione

Hunter Gilliam

Postgame Press Conference



LSU 14, Kentucky 0

NICK MINGIONE: Give LSU a lot of credit. They did a lot of things good. They pitched at a high level, they defended at a high level, and obviously they swung the bats at a real high level.

We didn't. That was the reason why the outcome was the way it was. And I tip my cap to them for a well-played game.

Q. Hunter, do you take any solace in the fact that you were in this hole this past weekend where you were facing elimination games like you are now? Are you able to pull from what you did last weekend going forward?

HUNTER GILLIAM: Yeah, I think last weekend definitely gives us a sense of confidence. We play well when our backs are against the wall. You've got a lot of guys in that locker room who aren't ready to be done playing together yet.

Yeah, last weekend is what it is, but we're ready for tomorrow. We'll be locked in.

Q. Hunter, this is going to sound obvious, but what makes Paul Skenes so tough to hit from your perspective?

HUNTER GILLIAM: Yeah, give that guy a lot of credit. He goes up there, he competes with three pitches in the zone, and he comes right at you. He's just a really good competitor, and I think that's what makes him probably one of the best pitchers in the country is how competitive he is. He's a big presence up there that wants to compete, and yeah, a lot of credit to Paul. He's really good.

Q. Hunter, what was your perspective of the day, kind of a strange day with the delay, and it never rained and just the waiting and everything? What was it like to go through that today?

HUNTER GILLIAM: Yeah, today the whole weather forecast stuff was crazy, but our mindset is whatever happens, good. If we'd have pushed it back until 2:00 in the morning, we're ready to go. The result wasn't what we wanted, but the whole waiting around, that didn't have too much to do with it. We just didn't play our best game tonight.

Q. Nick, I know this was a strange day. Do you have any quarrels with how the weather situation was handled, and do you think that had any impact on the result tonight at all?

NICK MINGIONE: No, I sat right there yesterday and answered that same question and just basically said, hey look, the weather is going to be what it is, and we're going to trust whoever makes the calls, and we're going to live with it. We're not going to point any fingers or make any excuses, so that would be my same answer to that.

Q. Obviously the message is clear to your guys tomorrow, fight, keep your season alive, but what do you sense out of your team, especially after last weekend, and what's it going to take tomorrow?

NICK MINGIONE: Well, last time we were here it was the same thing. Very similar outcome, very similar deal, where we didn't play our best and we came out the next day and played exceptionally well and had a chance to win on Sunday. Been there, done that. I told the team that just now. Hey, we've been in a very similar situation, not only last weekend but the last time we were here.

Obviously a lot at stake tomorrow, but we've been here before.

Q. You guys had some success against Paul the last time you guys were here. What sort of change do you think with Paul and what you guys were seeing at the plate today?



NICK MINGIONE: There was two things. One, he was up to 102 miles an hour, and two, he threw more off-speed pitches than he did fastballs. Let that sink in. He threw the ball 102 miles an hour and he threw more off-speed pitches than he did fastballs, so he made the adjustment and we didn't.

Q. What did the NCAA people tell you when the game was changed at the beginning and throughout the day, and what were your thoughts when it never rained?

NICK MINGIONE: They did a great job keeping us in the loop with communication. Myself, Jay, we were there. Everything that was talked about was communicated to the coaches, and they basically told us when we were playing and when we weren't and when the weather was coming and when the weather wasn't. They did all the communication.

Listen, I grew up in the state of Florida, okay. I understand the weather, and it can be a challenge sometimes. They made the calls, and we played when they told us to play, and we got the game in.

Q. Zack has been your guy all year, obviously your ace. What do you tell him after tonight? What went wrong for him and what do you tell him?

NICK MINGIONE: The thing about Zack is he's really bright. Even me walking out there and doing the visit on the mound, he's already telling me what he did wrong. That's how you get to that spot. That's why you get the ball when it matters the most is because you understand, and this game comes down to execution, and we didn't execute well enough.

He knows that. He knows the pitches. He knows everything as it relates to what he did wrong and what he needs to do better. That's why he gets the ball.

Q. Just the up again, down again, did that affect him at all?

NICK MINGIONE: No, one thing we do in our program, we talk all the time about we will not whine, complain or make excuses. He won't do that. I won't do that. You don't get to this spot by allowing your players and yourself to make excuses. We don't do that. We're Kentucky wild cats and do not do that.

Q. Zack threw in relief last time he faced LSU. What went into giving him the start today?

NICK MINGIONE: Well, Zack has been starting for us and

he's been throwing the ball exceptionally well, as well as anybody on our team, so that was an easy decision for us based on how well he's throwing and the role we've been using him in coming into this weekend.

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