

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Florida Gators

Coach Kevin O'Sullivan

Michael Robertson

Cade Kurland

Postgame Press Conference

Vanderbilt 6, Florida 3

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I mean, bottom line is we got beat. Cunningham threw the ball good, and obviously the closer -- reliever came in and did a nice job. We just had a hard time manufacturing runs. I don't know how many guys we left on base, but we had the opportunity there with two runners on with nobody out, and unfortunately we had two at-bats there where we struck out back to back.

But that was an opportunity for us to take an early lead. Then we turned back around and walked Espinal to start the second, and then we got two runs on the board.

But ultimately we just got beat, simple as that. The inability to make some two-strike, two-out pitches with runners in scoring position cost us a couple runs and gave up a third one with two outs. We had to pitch out on him, didn't hit the catcher in the chest.

Little things like that add up in a game like this. Obviously Corb's team played better than we did today, and we'll move forward.

Q. Question for both of you. What were you seeing from Cunningham today? It was one of his better performances that we've seen so far this season. What were you seeing from him that just made it tough for you guys to get anything going offensively?

CADE KURLAND: Well, he kind of located his stuff. His fastball had some ride, and he threw a slider and changeup, and I felt like we didn't adjust to what he was doing, and we failed to execute.

MICHAEL ROBERTSON: Absolutely. He was in the zone



with all of his pitches, and I don't think we did our job as a whole as hitters. Yeah, just didn't compete, I think, how we would have liked to, and didn't really compete in a way that would allow us to have a whole bunch of success off that guy. So, yeah, struggled.

Q. Michael, you guys make a little push in the ninth inning. How much does the success you guys had in even getting here with what you did last weekend continue to give you guys belief that even in a spot like that you have what it takes to come back and make a game of it there?

MICHAEL ROBERTSON: Yeah, I think we feel we're never out of a game so doesn't really matter the deficit. We always have belief in that, and I think we have the guys that at the end of the day we can get it done no matter what the score is.

Yeah, tried to put some good at-bats together there at the end, but unfortunately came up short.

Q. Cade, obviously two-hit game, something to at least look at positively. How would you say that you tried to keep things going if the rest of the team is struggling? How do you try to serve as a catalyst for the offense? What's the mindset there?

CADE KURLAND: I mean, it's the same as always, regardless what the score is, what's going on. Just going up there and trying to get my job done because there's no excuses. Just getting a quality at-bat and getting something going.

Q. What's the mindset as you're talking to the team going into NCAA regionals not really knowing what your fate might be?

CADE KURLAND: I mean, I feel like that's out of our control, so it's just focus on things we can control, continue as normal. Work hard, prepare. That's all you can do.

MICHAEL ROBERTSON: Absolutely. Right now it's an unknown. All we can do is put our heads down and continue to work this coming week, and whatever happens



happens. We're ready to rock.

well today.

Q. You guys had to work so hard to put yourselves in this position. Obviously today didn't go like you want. Where do you see your position as you try to get into regional play?

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Quite honestly, I thought our biggest hurdle was to get above .500. That was the first obstacle we needed to get over. Then obviously there's five of us that have 13 wins in the league.

Anybody can look at the metrics, strength of schedule, how many quad 1 wins. But at the end of the day, I look at things a little bit differently. There's potentially six hosts in our league, which we've never had before. We've went 9-9 against them. Obviously went into Baton Rouge and won two out of three.

Our schedule was really difficult down the stretch the last five series. We did what we needed to do to win two out of three at Georgia, which obviously is not an easy thing to do. Our schedule is difficult.

But we do that for a reason: For us to be able to be battle tested when we get into postseason. We play three against Florida State, three against Miami every year. Yeah, so there's been some inconsistencies, but at the same time, we've proven that we can play with anybody in the country. We've just had some inconsistencies along the way, like most of the teams that have 13 wins in our league. I think everybody would tell you the same thing.

But it's up to the committee, and there's nothing that I can say or do, and I'm not going to sit here and politic for our team. But at the same time, that one simple thing, going 9-9 in 18 league games against teams that are potentially going to host or be national seeds, I think that says something.

Q. You saw Cunningham, whatever it was, six weeks ago now. Do you perceive he was better this time around, or was it just a matter of not cashing in this time?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: I think he was a lot more efficient, to be honest with you. There wasn't a whole lot of misses. In a game like this, we walk Espinal to start the second and it gets things going, he was able to navigate that, and he did a good job getting the lead-off hitter.

The frustrating part on my end is we -- many of our hitters were attacked pretty much the same way from at-bat to at-bat and we didn't make very many adjustments, simple as that. But Cunningham did execute, so he pitched really

