

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Texas A&M Aggies

Coach Jim Schlossnagle

Gavin Grahovac

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee 7, Texas A&M 4

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Congratulations to Tennessee. I thought they played outstanding. We knew the lefty, the starter, and Causey were going to be a lot to deal with. We couldn't match them either on the mound or gave up a lot of free bases, walks, threw the ball around the field.

Gavin swung the bat well enough to keep us in the game, keep us close, but Tennessee outplayed us for sure. Best of luck to them the rest of the way.

Q. What makes Causey such a tough at-bat, arm slot, movement, something else?

GAVIN GRAHOVAC: Yeah, a lot of movement on his ball, throws from a different angle. You don't see it every day, so it's hard to work on it anytime you have.

But guy has got good stuff, and he overpowered us today.

Q. Overall, for your entire year, being Freshman of the Year, what did that honor mean to you? And moving forward, how do you continue the season that you've had? And you also tied Jace for the freshman record today.

GAVIN GRAHOVAC: It's a blessing. It's an honor to win that award. Been working hard all year. Coaches put their faith in me to go out there and perform. Obviously it worked out pretty well for the most part. Came up short in this tournament, but that's all right.

Just going to continue to work. It's just an accolade. It doesn't affect how I play the game, how we win or lose. Just got to go out there every day, continue to compete, hopefully win some ballgames.

Q. What do you expect the message to be from your coaches, the veterans on the club about flushing this, moving on to bigger things you've got coming up the next couple weeks?

GAVIN GRAHOVAC: Continue to work hard, continue to play the game. Coach never really has words of discouragement. He's going to continue to tell us to work hard, continue to keep going. It's a long season. We've played well a lot of the season. We've had a rough few weeks, but we're still the Aggies and we're going to continue to play Aggie baseball.

Q. Wasn't a whole lot to gain, wasn't a whole lot to lose, either, other than from a regional standpoint. How do you approach it, and is it all about the future, or are you trying to do some things this week maybe differently than in the past?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Man, I wish I had an answer for that. You'd like to think that your team is super motivated to win, whether you're playing freaking ping-pong or Rock, Paper, Scissors or a baseball game in the SEC tournament. It's so fun to be here, like, nobody wants to go home.

But at the same time, you know we've played all season long to earn the right to get to play at home at least the first round. I'm assuming we're going to get to do that.

I don't know about -- if we play like that, there's not going to be a second round. Doesn't matter where the game is scheduled. My last year at TCU we were a national seed and lost our own regional.

It's such a weird thing, especially with young players. They know what's going on. So it just comes down to, I don't know, who executes pitches. You're trying to get Prager a little bit of work, but I'm not going to ride him. You never can get in the mind of a player. As soon as you know, let me know so I can do a better job at it.

It's the weirdest thing. I know how I feel. Like I'm ultra competitive, but I don't get to play. It feels -- losing these games feels as bad as any game to me. Winning never



feels as good as losing feels as bad to me. I don't know how it feels to them. We'll find out. But yeah, I mean, there's much better coaches than me.

2015, I've talked about this before, at TCU I think we won the league and we went two and out in the conference tournament, and the first text message I had after the game was from Augie Garrido, and he said: This is the best thing to ever happen to you.

Didn't feel that way, but we ended up in Omaha for the second time. That was number two of four in a row.

We definitely need to get home. We obviously play better at home. The 12th Man is real. We've earned the right to do that, at least the first round. So maybe that'll be what gets us over the hump.

But three of the last four weekends we've been on the road and haven't played very well. So we've earned the right to play at home. Maybe that'll get us going.

Q. You alluded to this a little bit, but I have to imagine you and Max had a lot of conversations this week about things like how long you want to go with Prager, how you want to use Tanner Jones. Was that the biggest piece of moving pieces for you?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, it was. Prager is the kind of guy that needs to throw, Sdao is the kind of guy that can probably do better with rest. So had we played a game tomorrow, probably would have thrown Shane out there for a little bit.

But, again, I think you play the whole regular season, and especially in this conference, when you earn the right to get to play at home, then you want to make sure that you're ready to go.

I've watched a lot of these press conferences over the years long before I was in the league, and I remember Coach Corbin saying one time, I just can't wait to play somebody that's not in the SEC.

That's not a disgrace to another conference school. There's plenty of great teams out there. It's just everybody in this league, you just know each other so well, and you get exposed on the things you can't do well. It's just relentless. Especially a team like Tennessee. We've played Arkansas and Tennessee each of the last two weeks, and those are two great teams, and when you're scuffling a little bit, there's no room for you to come out of it.

Q. What makes that opener piggyback combination of

Stamos and Causey so effective for Tennessee?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Well, they've been doing it all year. Frank Anderson and Tony himself are as good as there is in the country at what they do. You try to prepare for both, but you can't really because they're so different.

With the level of pitching they have over there, it's awesome -- it's not awesome when you're in the other dugout, but it's awesome to see how they just create a different look, and we try to do that some, as well. But that's a tough duo, man. It's really tough to prepare for.

Q. I think the total for the week now is 32 home runs in this event. The record is 36, and there's still seven -- record here is 36. There's still seven games left. Can you put your finger on why so many balls are flying over the wall?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, I haven't -- this is only my third year here, so it's hard for me to speak to that, not being in the league for a while.

I think that's really the game now across the country, especially post-COVID. The players are so good. Christian Moore won the Triple Crown in our league and wasn't the Player of the Year in the conference? Is that true? Come on, what are we doing? I'm not taking anything away from Charlie, I'm just saying that's how good the players are. I think it's all across the country.

The wind is blowing out here more than they tell me it normally does, but I just think the strike zone is tight. When the umpires are held accountable, there's so much advanced analytics and -- you can't hide anything. So when you make bad pitches, the players are so big and strong and talented -- but I'll tell you, it's not like that in the other leagues as much. That's the thing I wonder about. Going into the conference tournament, the Big 12 leader in homers had 17. Where does that fall in this league? I don't know if it's the ballparks. I don't know. But it's definitely different. It's a huge part of the game.

Q. Where do you feel like Braden is on kind of getting back to who he's been for you guys?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah. We've got work to do, and he knows that. Braden's best trait is also his nemesis. He really cares a lot. He cares a lot about -- he carries the weight of his performances on his back, and that's not great for baseball. That can double up on you pretty quick. The game is already hard enough.

He knows that. It's called a batting average for a reason, so my guess is you're going to see some cool highlights



out of him in the regional. But yeah, we're going to get home, we're going to get some rest, and we're going to get to work.

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