

# Louisiana State University Baseball Media Conference

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## Tom Galligan

LSU President

## Scott Woodward

LSU Director of Athletics

## Jay Johnson

LSU Head Baseball Coach

Press Conference



seasons and all the work that he's been doing to ensure a seamless transition into the next era of excellence for our baseball program.

Thank you again. Welcome, Jay and Maureen. Geaux Tigers!

And now I will turn it over to the person who I think is the best athletic director in the United States of America, my friend and colleague, Scott Woodward.

SCOTT WOODWARD: Thank you, President Galligan. That's too kind of you.

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, and thank you for all of those who are watching here inside Alex Box Stadium. I'm thrilled to welcome our new baseball coach Jay Johnson and his wife Maureen to LSU. I can't think of a better place for this introduction than the Champions Club because that is the legacy Coach Bertman built, the legacy Coach Mainieri continued and the legacy Coach Johnson inherits today.

It is a legacy that I'm certain Jay will continue to build upon and build upon quickly because everywhere he goes, he wins immediately. At the University of Nevada he inherited a team 14 games back in the conference standings and turned them into the Mountain West champions in two seasons. At the University of Arizona he inherited a team with six winning seasons in the conference in 30 years and brought them to the College World Series the first year to the final game. Last season he let the Wildcats to the Pac-12 championship and back to Omaha. That success is not an accident. It is the product of the most prepared coach in college baseball.

Jay's teams aren't just prepared, they produce, too. Last year his offense scored more runs than any team in the country. The last two seasons his team has led the Pac-12 in runs, hits, walks on-base percentage, slugging percentage and batting average. Needless to say, that's the kind of offense we're looking forward to.

I know these stats will be music to the ears of those LSU fans who remember fondly Coach Bertman and the "gorilla ball" days. Eddy Furniss, wherever you are, we love you, babe. We have fond memories of that. Coach Bertman is a man who established an unprecedented legacy of

BILL FRANQUES: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us today for the introductory press conference for Coach Jay Johnson, the leader of our next generation of national champions here at LSU baseball.

To begin with, I'd like to welcome to the podium the president of Louisiana State University. He has served in that role for the past year and a half and has done an unbelievable job for our state and for our university in an unprecedented time in our history of the university, of the country and of the world. We owe a great debt of gratitude to him. He's wrapping up his service as president. He'll be returning to the LSU law school at the beginning of July.

Please join me in welcoming LSU president Tom Galligan.

TOM GALLIGAN: Thank you very, very much. Good afternoon, and thank you for joining us today as we begin writing a new chapter in the storied history of LSU Tigers baseball. We're extremely excited to welcome Jay Johnson and his wife Maureen into our LSU family. Welcome.

We really look forward to celebrating many Tiger wins with you in the years ahead.

Jay is a proven leader, a talented recruiter, a dedicated student of the game who is great at developing hitters. He's well prepared to build upon the legacy of our baseball program and lead our Tigers to even greater success in the seasons ahead.

I want to congratulate athletic director Scott Woodward on making yet another great coaching hire for LSU. I also want to really thank Coach Paul Mainieri for all the wonderful memories he's given us over the past 15



excellence for LSU baseball and Coach Mainieri carried it forward for 15 seasons.

When Paul announced his retirement one month ago today, I had a clear picture of the qualities I wanted in the next head coach of the premier college baseball program in the country. I wanted to hire a teacher, someone who was passionate about our student-athletes and their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. That's Jay Johnson.

I wanted to hire a winner, someone who had proven he knew how to build championship programs and bring them to Omaha. That's Jay Johnson.

Most of all, I wanted to hire someone who was ready, ready for this moment, ready for the expectations, ready to win championships, and there is nobody in the world who is more ready for this job than Jay Johnson because he's been preparing for this moment for his entire life.

It is now my pleasure to introduce to you the 26th head baseball coach of the LSU Fighting Tigers, Jay Johnson.

JAY JOHNSON: I don't think I can do it as well as Coach O, but Geaux Tigers! Start this thing off right. That was the only thing we need to say to start this thing off.

I'm honored to be here. I'm incredibly humbled to be here. When I think about the 44 years of my entire life, I really believe every day has led me to this podium right now, to this program, and it's beyond a dream come true.

I didn't come here for any other reason because this doesn't come along but one time in your life, and I view this opportunity to be the head baseball coach at LSU as the opportunity of my lifetime.

Getting started, gratitude is a big thing to me. You don't get to a moment like this without the help of really, really influential and important people. President Galligan, I haven't got a chance to meet you yet until we shook hands right there, but I am very honored to meet you. I'm honored to have this opportunity that you ultimately signed off on with the advisement of Scott and the athletic department and these two great Hall of Fame coaches. So thank you.

Scott, Stephanie, Dan, Verge, thank you. I'm honored to be here, and I really, really respect and appreciate how you guys approached me through this entire time, and there's nothing I want to do more than to give you exactly what you want and want to see just right over there on that field, and I'm going to do everything in my power to do that, to make you guys, the state of Louisiana, LSU, the Baton

Rouge community incredibly proud. That is my mission, and that is what we have started working on a couple days ago.

These two guys right here, Coach Bertman and Coach Mainieri, start with Coach Bertman. I've got a great story about Coach Bertman. I didn't get a chance to meet him until last night, but I was a very young coach like 24 years old, 23 years old coaching like Connie Mack baseball, and I had no idea what I was doing at that point in time, so who's the best in the country at what I want to do? It was Skip Bertman. So I bought his videotape, so he made some money off me a long time ago. It was called "How to win the big one."

I can't tell you how influential that was that my development as a coach. I have a great story about this, too. I was coaching 16- to 18-year-old boys, and your speech, speeches and your motivational sheets and all of these things that you utilized to motivate your players to do amazing things. Five national championships in a 10-year period is legendary. I look at this man and I see the John Wooden of college baseball. This is the greatest college baseball coach of my entire lifetime.

Coach, we didn't meet until yesterday, we didn't talk on the phone until a couple days ago, but you've been influencing me for a very long time. I want to say thank you for that. I'm not standing here today if it's not for that right there, because winning is about people and getting people to do things that they didn't think were possible.

Everybody knows what a good baseball player looks like. They can see it. It's tangible. You can touch it. You can put it on a radar gun. You can look at it with pitch ability, but it's another thing to get that person to really believe that they're important, they have value and they can become anything that they want to become.

The Hold on to the Ropes story was told in a small town in California, like we'll go 2001, so 20 years ago, and I believe that was the start of my journey here.

So Coach, thank you for showing exactly how this was to be done.

Coach Mainieri. At 29 years old at the University of San Diego, probably in June, probably sometime right around this time, Coach Mainieri was hired at LSU, and I watched that press conference, and I'm not into that sort of thing all the time, but who's Skip Bertman going to choose to lead LSU baseball back to national prominence? Paul Mainieri.

I remember, Coach, watching that day and thinking about you that's exactly how I want to do this, and it was very

clear to me that Coach made the right choice.

Another great story about Coach Mainieri that I'll never forget, I was at the convention in San Diego in maybe 2002 or 2003 and Coach Mainieri's speech was how do you win in cold weather. He was at Notre Dame, so I'm like, man, I'm coaching in San Diego right now, I can't wait to hear this. So Coach Mainieri goes up there, and he goes, people were asking me, how did you do it, how did you get to Omaha at Notre Dame. He goes, yeah, it's real simple how to win in the cold; the first thing you've got to do it put on a jacket. And he puts on a jacket.

And right then and there, that was an example of another man, another leader that really knew exactly how to inspire people to get to people and all of those things.

Now fast forward 15 years, the day Coach Mainieri announced his retirement. The SEC Network is on all over the United States, and we had a late game that night. It was in the afternoon, and Coach was probably up here in the same room talking about retiring, and I watched the press conference, for no other reason than I just wanted to hear him talk about his journey, his lifelong passion, where he was at, how he got to that point.

Coach, the class that you displayed in that was something that's what I want to emulate on a daily basis. Thank you for setting such a great example as a national championship coach that did everything exactly how it needed to be done. At that time there was nothing on my mind other than getting to Omaha and the College World Series, but I shot Coach a text and I just said, Thank you for being such a good example. This is exactly how I want to do this.

A day later Coach got back to me, and a week later they're in the NCAA tournament, in the loser's bracket, lose the first one, got to win four in a row. All three of us have been in that position before at some point in time and have gotten out of regionals and won regionals. For your team to do that, thankfully my team won three games on Sunday, so I got to watch the Tigers on Monday night and how you manipulated the pitching. You got the best out of what you had. Your guys really rose to the occasion for you that night. That really inspired me. For you to finish your career that way being a regional champion was amazing, and that's a reflection of your leadership.

More than anybody else, these two men right here, that's why I call this the honor of my lifetime, okay, to be entrusted with a program that Coach Bertman built and that Coach Mainieri carried on with first class every day that they did it.

The only thing better that they are than baseball coaches is incredible human beings. I'm glad you're both in town. I'm glad I have both of your phone numbers, and it will be used continually as we try to carry on this legacy that both of you guys have done an amazing job building. So thank you, guys. Let's give these two a hand, please.

I've gotten a lot of questions about why here and why now. I think I've just explained that relative to the coaches.

Ben McDonald, Todd Walker, Eddy Furniss, Warren Morris, Coach Bertman's guys. You literally couldn't turn on the TV in the '90s and not see that purple jersey running around Omaha. I remember exactly where I was in 1996 when Warren Morris hit the walk-off home run. I was a very average junior college second baseman and I remember thinking, man, I really wish I was Warren Morris at that time.

I remember exactly the walk-off win against Stanford in 2000 to win the national championship and being down in the ninth inning and your guys continuing to believe, continuing to push. Everything you want as a coach, your players rising to the occasion at the most important time of the game. Again, a reflection of your leadership.

And when I think about Coach Mainieri, Ryan Theriot, DJ LaMahieu, Anthony Ranaudo, Alex Bregman, the list goes on and on. I really don't want to leave anybody out, but think about those names and the future players that are going to come to LSU. You can't have better examples of what you want to achieve someday.

Everything is possible here when you talk about Omaha, when you talk about national championships, when you talk about training to become a Major League player someday, and the winning and the championships are great, and that's what we're here for. That only happens through elite development. Again, a testament to these two men. That's exactly what we're going to do here is we're going to develop players, and I'm excited to do that.

We've started that process, being on the phone with them, initial contact, getting to know guys, diving into that from the very first day of school. What they're doing right now in summer ball is all going to be part of the journey to lead them to being the very best player that they can be.

These two coaches, those players and every other player that's an LSU alum, all I want to do, as Coach Mainieri said, he wanted to make Skip proud, I want to carry that on. When I feel any great responsibility in this, not to myself, I'm going to work harder than any baseball coach in the country, any coach in the country. Our players are going to be -- there's going to be a lot demanded of them.

They're going to work harder than any other college baseball team in the country.

We're not going to win because it says Tigers across our chests. We're going to win because of the heartbeat inside of the player with Tigers on his chest, the head, the decision making of the player that has Tigers written across his chest, and doing things on a daily basis that are going to lead to the improvements necessary to be an elite Division I baseball team that's playing their best at the end of the season, that can create opportunities for themselves and then capitalize on them when they have them.

A couple other more personal thank yous. My wife Maureen is here. There's oftentimes coaches will talk about their spouse and they understand it. They get it, the lifestyle of a coach. Why a woman would want to marry a high-level Division I baseball coach, they're out of their minds. She's way smarter than that. She doesn't just understand it, she makes our program better, and as you guys get to know her as a community, our team, I have the best wife in the world, to help me do my job at the level that it needs to be done, to put LSU exactly where we all want LSU baseball to be. Maureen, thank you.

I've had three great coaches and mentors in my life. Their names you don't know, but I would not be standing here at this podium at this press conference at Louisiana State University without them. The first one is my dad. I was very lucky to get an early start on what is a coach, what is a great coach, and so my dad, from the time I was this big, the expectations were high relative to work ethic, relative to what was required to be the best. He was a football and a track coach, and to give you some perspective on it, he did not lose a track meet for literally a 10-year period and all of those guys made for a pretty good football team, as well. So I grew up at seven, eight, nine years old watching game tape.

I don't know if Coach O is here, but if you need any help with the Wing T offense or goal-line package or those types of things, I love football, so Geaux Tigers, and I can't wait to be a part of those games in the fall.

My dad showed me exactly how to do this thing, held a high standard. That's all I've known for my entire life, which has led to preparation for an opportunity like this.

Scott Sarver was my college coach, and I was a very, I'll call it, average player. Did things well a lot of the time, did things not so well sometimes. But he saw something in me and gave me an opportunity from playing career is over to immediately coaching, and at 23, 24 years old, run out to third base, run the offense, go recruit, figure out ways to get better players.

I didn't approach that job like I was at an NAIA school, I approached it like I was at LSU. I got to learn, I got to develop, I got to make mistakes, I got to see what worked, and was a really, really key piece and time in my development, so I wanted to talk about that. Thank Coach Sarver.

After I was the head coach at Point Loma, I made the most difficult decision, in my opinion, in my coaching career, to go to the University of San Diego and coach for a man named Rich Hill and have the opportunity to be his associate head coach at the University of San Diego. I got an eight-year crash course in exactly how an elite Division I baseball program should be run. When you talk about teaching, motivating, developing, how you treat your players, how you hold them accountable and all of that, did the most important thing it could do for me to get to a point like this, which is it showed me how to do it.

I was given great autonomy to do my job within the program like I was a head coach, and the greatest compliment I got from Coach Hill was you're not like everybody else, you did this for eight years like this was your program.

The example, the opportunity to fail, the opportunity to succeed prepared me for when I went to the University of Nevada and the University of Arizona, and Scott mentioned the quick turnarounds. There's a blueprint to that which I'll talk about briefly. But those three men I owe my coaching career to.

Probably the most important -- not probably, the most important product that any coach and the most impressive product that will be in our program will be our players, and I've been very blessed at four different schools to have players of elite talent, of elite competitiveness and of elite character.

The same thing will be demanded of the LSU Tigers baseball team at a high level. I can't wait to get started and to be in the locker room and look them in the eyes and talk about the expectations, not of winning but what it takes to win because you guys will be here on a Friday night on a one-run game and we're going to find a way to win that game, but that game will be on the practice field, in the weight room, in team meetings, in individual meetings, by doing the right thing on a daily basis, and the improvement will come out and put us on top of a 4-3 game, and you guys will be on your feet cheering, being very proud of what you're seeing, of a team that's at its best when its best is needed, which John Wooden defined competitive greatness that way.



I get asked all the time, how are you going to do it. Okay, it's LSU. Expectations, all of those types of things. That's why I came here. You stare challenges in the face and you go do it.

Here's how we're going to do it. We're going to recruit. What does that mean? We're going to sell a vision of the elite college baseball program in the country where anything is possible. You get a chance to be the next Warren Morris at the plate in the ninth inning of the College World Series and come through. You get a chance to be the next Alex Bregman. Everything is possible here. Not easy; every day will matter in terms of building you to that point in time. And at that point in time, you'll be ready when that is what's called for.

What does that look like? That looks like a player of elite talent, elite character with a work ethic known to mankind because that is what's going to be required to be successful in our program.

Development, there's no better place, and I've walked in the room over here the other day with looking at all the Major League jerseys. Every player out there that's a 15-, 16-, 17-, 18-year-old player that's looking at the elite programs across the SEC, across the country, wants to be a Major League player. If you are listening right now, there will be no better place for you to develop to achieve your dream of being a Major League player someday.

With that being said, you'll be required to be an elite teammate, an elite person, and combining those things together, there's no limit to what you can accomplish.

Recruit, develop, win. And I know what that means to you. It means the same thing to me. But it means something else. What is important now? We can't go to Omaha today. But our players out in summer baseball can be doing something that can move us in that direction. Our players that are in the weight room or summer school can be doing something today that is moving us in that direction.

When we get to September 1st and we're on the field and four-on-ones or skill work, we're going to be doing something to move us in that direction, and where we're at that day is the most important day. You stack up a lot of those days and then you can start talking about Omaha, Nebraska, and national championships, but you have to earn the right to do that.

Every day we're going to be building this program to do that by focusing on what is exactly in front of us at that point in time.

And then you have to repeat it. LSU is not going to win championships because of things that happened in the past. LSU is going to win championships because of the decisions everybody involved in the program, our administration, our coaching staff, our players, our support staff, our fans are all united, all aligned doing the things that they need to do to ensure that happens.

So recruit, develop, win, what's important now, and then we constantly have to be repeating that process.

What is my goal? My goal is when you look out on that field at Alex Box Stadium, there's a brand of baseball that everybody in this state, in this community associated with this university is incredibly proud of. You know what that looks like. You've seen it. No program in college baseball has seen it on a more consistent basis than LSU. All I want to do is pour my life into continuing that.

Without anything else, I couldn't be more excited to be here. Thank you, Scott, again, for the opportunity. This state, this university is going to get everything that I've got. And the same thing out of our players, and Geaux Tigers.

**Q. Coach, how quickly do you expect to name a staff? How far along are you on that?**

JAY JOHNSON: Yes, absolutely. Working very diligently with that. I will not sacrifice time to make sure we have the right people. The most important people in influencing the players that we all want to play great, be great students and be great people is the coaching staff, and we spend more time with them than their own families, so I'm working diligently.

I'm talking to a lot of people. It is not a narrow search because it's too important to get that right. We need a staff that can recruit at an elite level, meaning evaluating talent, evaluating players that are worthy of playing on this field, that have the makeup, character and ability to do that and do it in a way that's going to help us win championships, and that's a skill that has to be developed.

And then from a development standpoint, finding a pitching coach, finding an assistant hitting coach that they want to put their trust in to be developed so check achieve their dream of being a Major League player, and while they're on their way to being a Major League player, they're helping LSU to win a lot of baseball games. We're working as fast as we can to get the right person.

**Q. You mentioned you've talked to a couple of the players already that are on this team. I'm curious what your impressions are of the roster that you've inherited and just the relationships you're already starting to**



**build with these players.**

JAY JOHNSON: That's a great question. This is LSU. This is the place in college baseball. I've viewed LSU as college baseball. So it's exciting either way.

Scott mentioned the previous stops that I went, and at the time all of those were rebuilds. I look at this as a reboot. I say that because Paul and his staff did a really nice job of bringing in talent. I think it's talent that we're going to work hard to try to help them to play as good as they can.

I'm excited about that. I've watched some video over the past week or five days, whatever it's been, and we're starting a process of communicating some things with those players that we want them to do better and give them a blueprint to improve and to get better at.

It starts there, and the only way you start to do that is by building trust, developing relationships, and if you're going to win and win quickly, you need immediate buy-in. So we've started that process.

I'd be lying if I said, hey, I know I have the trust of every player in that locker room. I don't because I've only looked one of them in the eye face to face at this point in time, but I can't wait to do that because if we can build that, then there's talent, and then now that talent becomes usable skill.

I think there is talent that if we can just get the usable skill to be a little bit better, then they can really be successful.

**Q. You obviously watched LSU for a long time and viewed it as one of the best jobs in college baseball, but you're a West Coast lifer. When it comes to this decision, when Scott offered you the job, how difficult was it for you to leave that area of the country and come to a place that you might not be familiar with?**

JAY JOHNSON: Great question. I'll use the word difficulty. The difficulty is in relationships with players. That's what matters to me. I left a team that accomplished a lot of things, and they did it with, as I said, great fundamentals, a competitive attitude and were great people and character. So the difficulty was leaving that team.

That's exactly why I feel like I'm right for a place like this, because I do invest in the players and I do invest in the relationships and I invest in their process to be good. That's the only difficulty.

The rest of it is, let's go. There was probably one place in the country that it was a let's-go attitude. We're standing here right now. In that degree, it was not difficult at all.

**Q. I read when you were at Point Loma you wrote down a goal of getting to Idaho for the Junior College World Series and also Omaha some day. How did you figure you would get to this point? And you were at a program that has a great tradition, Arizona. How did you get to this point and figure this would be the ultimate point for you in your career?**

JAY JOHNSON: I'm going to use your word. I just view this as the ultimate. You can thank these two men right there for that. You know, it was a great place that I was at, and what made it great was the people. But this is the opportunity of my lifetime.

A lot of people will look at it and go, wait, why did you do that, what are you doing, you are a West Coast guy. That's comfortable. That's not what I'm about. You stare down the challenge of that, you figure out how to put the pieces in place to be successful, and then we're going for it.

I've been going for it for three or four days now. This press conference almost feels late. I'm knee deep into this thing and there's no other way I would have it.

I think it's more excitement and the challenge than anything else because these two men did a heck of a job and left as good as legacy as you possibly can, and so what an opportunity to have a chance to contribute to that.

**Q. You may have just addressed it, but the challenge, and you said staring it in the face a couple times. You came from a program that had a nice tradition. It's a voracious fan base here. How have you adjusted your game, I guess, to be the encompassing total coach that is required of a premier job like this?**

JAY JOHNSON: That's a great question. You mentioned the fan base. That's another reason I wanted to come. I want passionate people that want to achieve elite things around me. So when I mention our team, the fans are a part of that.

With that being said, we're going to take the best parts of that. There's only a handful of programs around the country that you can count where this many people show up at a college baseball game, and what I want to do, what I think it is important that we do, is create the best home-field advantage in college baseball, and I've heard that's what we have here, and then put a product on the field that they're extremely proud of, that when the Tigers show up, they know what they're going to get. They can't wait to get to the ballpark after a long day of work and they can't wait to high-five the players down the line after a big win, and they can't wait to send their kids to baseball camp

because they feel like they're a part of this thing.

For me, I only see that as a positive.

**Q. With all the success you had recruiting out on the West Coast, how do you translate that here in the South where the competition is a little more fierce in the SEC?**

JAY JOHNSON: Awareness. We just got done playing Vanderbilt in the College World Series. We just got done playing Ole Miss in the super regional. Both of those teams had a significant amount of players from the West Coast that were key players at key positions.

I can add to that. That's something that we can bring to LSU, and my connections and contacts will do that.

With that being said, I'm working on a well-rounded staff that can cut into the recruiting at other places, that can be as fierce, as competitive, as you said, to not just win or not just win recruiting battles because of our logo or because of our resources but because they know what they're going to get when they come play in our program. So by putting it together that way, I think it gives us a great chance with all the things that we have to put us right where we all want to be.

**Q. You take over and there's sort of a little bit of time before transfer portal stuff and the Major League draft coming up, which is obviously a huge event for college baseball, as well. What's sort of your plan over the next few weeks and how you intend to approach all that happening in a very short period of time when you're still setting up your staff?**

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah. You go. So what does that look like? It's announced, contract signed. I got on the phone. I got on the phone, reached out to the roster. I don't have a ton of answers or all of the answers for those guys at this point in time, but start to develop a foundation and relationship of trust.

July 1st relative to the transfer portal, I want to be fair. I want to give players an opportunity to figure out what is the best opportunity for them.

There's been a lot of communication, figuring out scholarships, roster, all of those types of things. I've spent a lot of time in doing that. The staff right now is important. It allows me to go slow with it because I need to focus on the players. If we're going to get to the College World Series, if we're going to win a national championship, it's because of the players and the roster, so I'm spending 24 hours a day managing that at this point in time, and it's

exciting. It's a really good challenge.

Like I said, there's really good players that are in this program right now that have the opportunity to improve, and something that I've always really wanted to see out of the players in our program is that their second year, you see improvement. Their third year, you see improvement, and at a place like this, some of them are going to be ready to go to professional baseball after that.

Another thing I love about LSU, and Paul has done a great job of this, and I'm sure Skip did the same, is because this is so special, those guys will want to come back for another year, a fourth year, because Minor League baseball -- this isn't Minor League baseball, this is the Yankee Stadium of college baseball.

I've talked to some of them, I had a face-to-face meeting with a player last night at 11:00 at night, and he was driving by the stadium and I happened to call him and said, why don't you come by. A player that's really struggling with hey, do I go now, do I stay.

That's because of what we have here. And then we started talking about the things that we could potentially do to help him create value for himself, and not to just sign a pro contract but be ready, really be ready when he goes and achieves that dream.

There's a lot of moving pieces to that because you're only allowed to have so many players, give so many scholarships and put together the right team. We're working through that, and then we'll get to staffing, and then we'll have a really good plan in place once all the hay is in the barn and we know what the roster looks like exactly, and then we're going to do to work.

**Q. Obviously we're a little early on for technical decisions and stuff like that, but for example whether you plan to coach from the dugout or as a base coach. How many of those kind of decisions have you made, and if not when and how do they get made?**

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I will coach from the dugout most likely. I've coached third base every year of my career until this year, and then three games into the season I made the decision to move in the dugout because that was best for that team. I think that's where I would lean right now, but that'll also be dictated by the personnel on the coaching staff and putting those guys in the best position to positively affect the players on game day.

Haven't made it, but that would be what I would lean towards, hire a hitting coach or assistant hitting coach with me that is really good at what they do in one-on-one work

with the players, hire a pitching coach that has significant experience at this level and has experience at a level that these players want to go, one or the other.

You'd be really impressed at the amount of coaching talent that wants to come to LSU. I've had a lot of new best friends over the past five days. (Laughter.)

**Q. Is it Oroville?**

JAY JOHNSON: Oroville.

**Q. I get a big grinder vibe from you, that you really like to get after it nonstop. Is that what you were speaking about when you talked about your father? Is that what you got kind of growing up in Oroville?**

JAY JOHNSON: Very blue-collar place for sure, but I was a 5'7", 165-pound running back that thought I was going to win the Heisman Trophy someday. Then I realized that wasn't going to be done on talent alone, and so that's just who I am. It's what's required to win at a place like this.

It's a beautiful place. It can really catch your eye, and we're going to really use that in recruiting, and it matters to young people nowadays.

And then when we step out on that field, I want it to be a completely different attitude, and with that it's great fundamentals, highest level of competitiveness, and what that means is no program can value winning and what it takes to win more than the LSU Tigers, and that doing that with the right mindset with the right players, now you can start accomplishing the things that everybody wants to accomplish. But it does not happen unless those things are in place.

So yeah, that's where I came from.

**Q. I watched your series against Ole Miss. I don't know what's in the Francona center, but the assets that you have available now, the tops, the physical assets that you have here, was that intriguing? Was that enticing about coming and being a part of this program?**

JAY JOHNSON: Yes, absolutely. With that being said, recruiting -- when I walked through that blueprint of recruiting, developing, focusing on what's important now and then repeating that, the development part is the most important part of that, if you have the right people in your organization. If you have the right people in your organization.

The things that we have available to us to put the right

people in our organization are very enticing, and it's very exciting. It's shaping how I want to go about putting our staff together relative to when you're at an NAIA school, when you're at two mid-major programs, you've really got to learn how to sell. You've really got to learn how to sell and make the player understand why they need to play for your program.

Then getting a chance to move to Arizona, a little better. A little better, but they were in eighth place for a couple years in a row, and we needed to get players, and it wasn't their first choice for players in the Pac-12, so that happened, as well.

Then you start to have success, you go to Omaha, you're a base hit away from winning a national championship, now it starts to become a little more enticing.

For me, it's about putting the pieces in place for recruits to understand, yes, you have all of this. Yes, it really catches your eye. Yes, it is special. I want them to feel what it's like to be out on that field if a recruit comes and watches a game and goes, there's no place in the country I'm going to go other than that because that's what I want. I want all that to be in place, and then I want them also to say like I want to go place for those guys. I want to entrust those guys with my development.

**Q. Your teams have a long history of being able to hit the ball well, and I'm just curious as to the philosophy that you've developed over your coach career and how you've had so much consistency with your teams in hitting.**

JAY JOHNSON: We're asking our players to develop through work ethic, all of those types of things, and as a coach I require the same thing of myself. I'm standing here today because I'm a better coach than I was two or three years ago or five years ago or ten years ago.

When I was hired as an assistant coach at the University of San Diego, I had two jobs: Recruit, get the best players we can, and develop the offense to score as many runs as we possibly can. That was a great laboratory for me to dive into that and say, I want to -- this is my area, so I want my area of the team to be the best part of the team. That was a challenge because we actually had some Major League pitchers on those teams, as well.

But I think in how I dive into running a program now, I was afforded an opportunity to really figure out offensive baseball and then what does your team need to do and what it's rooted in, and I have some very strong beliefs in terms of mechanics, in terms of vision, in terms of at-bats, in terms of what we call moving the offense, and every day



of our practice sessions or I call it training sessions is geared towards players improving. So game day shows up and they know exactly what to do, and then our staff is putting them in position to know exactly what's happening, how it's going to happen and what's going to be required of them to execute, to move the offense, to score runs.

Every team is different. In 2016 we led the country in sacrifice bunts. That's how the team was built. This year it wasn't going to happen a lot because somebody was going to walk and somebody was going to hit a double. That's what I think we can do here and incorporate a little bit of everything. Ultimately I want teams to hate to play us, and I think we accomplished that the last couple offensive teams that we had, and that's what I want to do at LSU.

BILL FRANQUES: Thanks so much, Coach Johnson, and to Scott and President Galligan for being with us this afternoon.

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