

College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Friday, May 30, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Daniel Dickinson

Anthony Eyanson

Postgame Press Conference



Offense comes and goes. It's a hard game to play. But if we lock down the defense behind our pitching staff, we know we're going to be in every single game possible.

Q. Daniel, you mentioned the offense comes and goes, but for you, I mean, a performance for you at the plate tonight, how much can that kind of give you momentum-wise for these upcoming big postseason games?

DANIEL DICKINSON: Yeah, you just try to come into these games with a lot of calmness. You just try and stay grounded. This was my first regional that I've been to in my college career. So I remember kind of -- I pray before the game and just kind of thanking God for the opportunity, looking around the atmosphere, taking it all in. I mean, this is just a blessing from him.

Confidence-wise, just having a game, knowing you can do it. One player feeds off another. (Indiscernible) started to be a fight at the bat rack towards the end of the game that we all enjoyed playing for each other tonight.

Q. Daniel, felt like nothing was going out anywhere tonight. You put two pretty special swings on the ball to get two to go out to left field when that wind was blowing really hard in. Talk about what you were seeing in those two at-bats, what you were looking for, how you were able to put a swing like that on two balls?

DANIEL DICKINSON: Yeah, my first two at-bats were kind of rough. Got out of my plan a little bit. Kind of chased balls that were buffer strikes, not really getting something that I can drive, putting myself in tough counts.

After my second at-bat, Coach Johnson walked up to me on the on-deck circle and said, get something you can drive, you're chasing the ball a little bit and you're getting yourself in tough counts.

I went up there got pitches that I could drive that were kind of over the heart of the plate and I put good swings on them.

LSU - 7, Little Rock - 0

JAY JOHNSON: Good win for our team tonight. I'm proud of the players. It was a long day obviously working through the delay and all that. But ready to go. It was great to be back at home after a couple of weeks.

I thought the crowd was electric. Really lifted the team. And then great performance, very complete performance, obviously starting with Anthony on the mound, did what he does. Kind of customary at this point in time.

Supported him with another 0 in the air-column game. And really good offense, scoring five of the eight offensive innings. And we'll look to duplicate it tomorrow.

Q. Anthony, you had a good curveball going today. What was sort of working for you early on, and what sort of changed throughout the outing for you?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Just wanted to execute. I'm going to say that probably every interview. But honestly just wanted to execute, slow down in the moment. Just take it all in. Super grateful for being on the mound. Just wanted to attack and compete, mentally be aggressive, going after the other team.

Q. Daniel, just talk about the defense. You guys played behind him, Steven tonight was really smooth, everybody was really smooth making the plays, and how important they are in getting you guys in and out of the dugout?

DANIEL DICKINSON: As an infield we take a lot of pride in our defense. We know defensively behind our pitching staff we know we can be in every single game that we play in.



Q. Daniel, we talked this week about the offense getting back into character. What is that character and how did you all display that tonight?

DANIEL DICKINSON: Our plan. I think it was one or two bunts, dirt ball reads, getting people to second base, getting people in scoring position with less than two outs, kind of just getting back to the details and the fundamentals. And then being able to put good swings on balls when we get them.

I think kind of early we got out of our plan. Just nerves, trying to get back and settle in, you know what I mean? And towards the end -- I mean even the third inning, that's where we found our role. And I think I'm excited to see what we can do down the stretch.

Q. Coach, you have taken a lot of Power Five transfers out of the portal the first couple of years. These guys don't fit that mold. They carried you tonight. How validating is that and your staff's evaluation and what these two guys have meant for your team this year?

JAY JOHNSON: These two are easy. When you go through this new era of recruiting in the portal in the summertime, there's always one or two guys that are going to tip your season to where you're hosting a regional, you're a national seed and you can compete for a national championship. And these were the two guys for this year. And we certainly have more and did a great job with the transfers we brought in, both with ability and character. But it starts with these two.

Q. This isn't your first time going through a weather delay, but what you guys do during the weather delay, and how do you combat that?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Eat Un crustables and lay down.

DANIEL DICKINSON: I drove to Chipotle, got some food and took a nap.

Q. Anthony, when did you find out you were going to start? What did you do during the two rain delays?

ANTHONY EYANSON: I know we had a little bit of a mix on who could start coming into this game. I found out later in the week, was prepared for it. Love pitching in the moment, whenever it is for me, whether that's starting or relieving.

Just really excited. I say that a lot. I'm going to keep saying that. Just really grateful for the opportunity. Just super fun to pitch in this game and open it up here.

During the delay, I literally just laid down, eating Un crustables, chilling. That's literally all I did.

Q. Anthony, you've been trending this way for a while but last 33 innings I think you've only allowed three earned runs in your last five outings here. What has gone into the late-season surge for you? Outside of the execution part, what do you think you really worked on to get to this point?

ANTHONY EYANSON: First-pitch strike, being ahead early in the count is always going to help me on the field. The defense behind me, they have been great. I think they deserve more credit than they get. Feels like the play is made every time. And it's really easy to pitch.

Just and confident, it's easy to be confident pitching knowing I have these guys behind me that are going to make the play nine times out of 10.

Q. Anthony, just knowing you're going to get the ball today to kind of set the tone, I guess, just what does that say to you about the belief that your coaches have in you? And how much were you wanting to rise to the occasion and prove them right?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Super blessed for the coach to believe in me to take the ball for the first game. Just means a lot. They show a lot of support. They help me a lot on and off the field to be the best version of myself. I think just seeing the trust that they had in me pitching the first game was a big step for me.

Q. Anthony, this is two weeks in a row you've done something out of the ordinary at least here at LSU. You came out of the bullpen last week and you start the opening game of the series, whatever it is this week. What allows you to succeed in kind of these moments that aren't routine for you this year?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Just being adaptable. Just being able to adapt to certain situations. Just understanding that my routine is going to prepare me for what's to come. And I think just learning how to master that and really control myself helps me for any situation.

Q. Anthony, a lot of ground balls tonight. How much of that was by design?

ANTHONY EYANSON: I mean, I'm not sure. I mean, they hit the ball on the ground, hit the ball in the air. As long as they're out, I'm fine with that.

Q. Anthony, with DJ and Maverick taking over for you,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

how much confidence did you have in those last two innings?

ANTHONY EYANSON: It's really cool seeing those guys progress, especially Mav. He's insane. But it's really cool seeing him grow and just keep working. I see his work every day just being at the field around him all the time. Just giving the ball to him and DJ, it was really cool to watch.

Q. Daniel, is there another guy in the dugout, in the lineup, during the game that, like you said, your first two at-bats you struggled a little bit -- is there another guy you go to saying what are you seeing? Is it someone you feel has a similar approach or swing that you have? How do they help you do that?

DANIEL DICKINSON: It's a team effort. A lot of people get pitched differently. You kind of just ask people. People come up to you, ask what they see. A lot of confidence boosting -- hey, get to the next one, get to the next one.

I know in between innings after the throw-down, me and Steven Milam, we talk in between, just get our handshake in, just keep going, stay with it, it's going to come. We take a lot of pride in our defense so it's always, hey, make a play and then go get to the next at-bat.

I know me and Ethan Frey talk a lot. But it's at the end of the day it's just a team thing, talking to each other, keeping everything involved and just going after it and knowing that it's nine guys in the lineup against one pitcher.

Q. Just the same thing I asked Anthony, seems like he's been trending in this direction for really four, five weeks now, really since that complete game. Just from a coach's perspective, what have you seen in kind of this next year that he seems to have taken over the last month or so?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I think number one, he's an incredible athlete. Not just a pitcher. He's an incredible athlete. Part of it is his conditioning. I've talked a lot bit about his ability to get better as the game goes along. It's the same characteristic; he's getting better as the season has gone along because he's in tremendous physical shape and condition.

And then I think he has great self-awareness. He's taken a few things that he needed to do a little bit better and done that. And it's accentuated or opened up all the options he has. He's just really tough to deal with. It's a lot coming at you. Makes it really hard to plan against.

Q. I know the stats might not show it but Michael

Braswell has seen the ball very well the last few weeks. What strides have you seen him make in those past few weeks, and what did you see from him tonight?

JAY JOHNSON: I thought he had three out of four at-bats were quality at-bats tonight. I think he's done an excellent job at third base. The question about the ground balls is more this particular team we were playing hits a ton of ground balls. And told the infield they were going to have to be very active tonight. And they were.

And Michael was at the center of that. He had a great first step several times. He's played exceptional defense at third base this year. Our whole entire infield has played exceptional defense. He's done that.

I think what he's done, he hasn't let the results of batting average and those types of things discourage him from doing what the team needs. He hit a mistake really hard. Most nights it's probably out of here. Just kind of a weird wind blowing in from that way.

Got a sacrifice bunt down and an RBI single, double, whatever it was there at the end of the game. And he has a lot of hay in the barn as far as a college baseball player. There's nothing he hasn't seen. He's a good competitor. And winning is really important to him. So he's really a perfect player for this particular team.

Q. I have to ask about the weather. When did you and the NCAA and Coach Curry decide or how did you decide it was best when the best time was to start the game?

JAY JOHNSON: I didn't decide anything. I got shown the circumstances of lightning within an 8-mile radius. It was popping up a lot really between 2:00 and 5:00 and then we had the storm. If I could control the weather, LSU would never lose a baseball game, I can promise you that.

Q. You've been dealing with weather delays throughout the season. For you mentally, what is it like with these long days at the ballpark, not only keeping yourself going, your staff, but as well as the team? Mentally at the end of the day are you just exhausted? What do you do to recharge yourself, especially with this regional?

JAY JOHNSON: Personally, I probably had a couple of coffees between 2:00 and 7:30.

But the guys, they're having the best time of their life. I just kind of give them updates of what's next. We were here early. We prepared well. Kind of our countdown from 2:00 start was starting at about 10:45. So we've been active

since about 10:45.

There were a couple of adjustments that when NCAA people came and told me what was what, I relayed it to the team. I think it was handled well.

The weather is just better here at nighttime. I don't know how to explain it, but that's what it is. So, yeah, we got the first game and we played a night game, and it's awesome. Now these two teams can experience what we've had like five times this year playing at midnight.

Q. A couple of coffees?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, probably two and a half to five, just kidding.

Q. You mentioned not bringing the bat to the field. Steven is a great example of that tonight. He got really into one as well. How happy are you for him to kind of stay with it and have some success here?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, he's a good player. I think when the target for him is right, which is just have quality at-bats and move the offense, he's an exceptional offensive player. And he did that tonight.

Couple of walks and a double. Our offensive philosophy is built around walks and doubles or walks and extra-base hits and ability to move the offense.

I saw him at his best tonight. Whatever you want to call it, end of the season last year, postseason or Frisco Classic, early SEC play, that's what he was tonight -- just a different level of commitment to his plan and focus. And we're a different team if he can do that.

Q. When did you decide to start Anthony and what led into that?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I made the decision on Wednesday, and I communicated it to him on Wednesday. As far as what went into that, I think we're fortunate to have what I would call two aces. And I always feel like in a must-win setting, which the postseason is, you lead with your ace. It could have gone either way for us with those guys. You're playing a hot team that won five games in a row last week that was feeling very good about themselves.

The other thing is, like, we've had great crowds through the year, but this was different tonight. And you want to make sure the pitcher can handle the moment. And that dude can handle any moment. And he did a great job for us tonight.

Q. When you first let Anthony and Daniel know that you were trying to recruit them and trying the sign them, did you get a lot of competition from other schools?

JAY JOHNSON: Oh, yeah, it was tough. All the big names that are hosting this weekend for Anthony, for sure. It took three visits, three or four visits in three or four days. We went first, and I'm glad we set a really high bar.

Then with Danny, it was pretty competitive with one other spot. And we just laid out a good baseball plan. And I told him I'd let him be himself. And I wouldn't want him to be anybody else because he's a great baseball player and he's a great human.

Q. Last weekend you guys didn't have a great time at the play but tonight you had 11 hits and were very active at the plate. What do you have to say about your team's resilience after a tough weekend?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I thought it was a really good offensive game and postseason baseball. Somebody told me their pitcher led the NCAA in ERA two years ago, was ahead of Paul Skenes. And he throws strikes and has different ways to get people out, and he's a good competitor.

That's also another reason with the pitching decision, no question about that.

I thought we were good tonight. We had really good base running, as Danny mentioned with Derek and Chris advancing on the ball in the dirt. Two-out RBIs which we call goldens, two-out hits are golden with runners in scoring position in the first two innings Jake and Jared.

Danny hits a mistake for a homer. Derek blitzes the ball, put a great swing on that double that Chris scored on, which he's done. That was great to see. And then another homer for Danny.

Just thought it was constant pressure, even in the innings we didn't score, it was kind of like we were poking them all night. That's what I believe this team is when it's at its very best.

Q. This is Danny's first regional that he's played in, and the fact that he kind of showed up in such a big way in that moment, what do you think that kind of says about him, the player?

JAY JOHNSON: Not a surprise. I often say can't like baseball or try to fit baseball into your life and play at LSU.

You've got to build your life around baseball. That's Danny. He's here for 11 months from the commitment to hopefully the College World Series and then he's going to go to pro baseball.

And he'll be really prepared mentally and physically for that because this is his deal. And that's why it's been a perfect match. He was the exact right player for us. Don't know if he was the most talented player in the portal but he was the right player for me and right player for us. He's had a great season and had a great night tonight.

Q. What's it mean to get this one in tonight and have a little bit of normalcy for tomorrow?

JAY JOHNSON: I think it's good. It's part of the design of playing a first game, and like I said, I try to pay attention to everything. I talked to Skip about this at length when I first got here. And then really that first ball, I think it was the fall of '21, nobody told me about the weather when I accepted the job here. Just Tucson and San Diego and Reno didn't really prepare me for what this is.

And so I just -- going through it in '23 in both Regional and Super Regional, it's kind of a no-brainer decision. The NCAA is really professional. They do a good job with it. And we just try to watch the weather and they make informed decisions. I keep the team ready to play.

We get a little bit of sleep, it's 11:02 right now. I guess it's only, what, 6:02 in Hawaii. So it's not that late. We'll get a good night sleep. I'm not sure what the game time is or ESPN or TV. I'm sure we'll find that out and we're at home and I like being at home.

Q. Everybody in the starting lineup got on base at least once tonight. What does it take to have a complete offensive effort like that?

JAY JOHNSON: I think just you heard them talk about staying in their character and staying in plan and being committed to it and not getting distracted by what's happened in the game previously or get too far ahead.

You can't win the game and have the game over in the first inning. You can't try to force it. You've got to let the game come to you a little bit. I thought we did that tonight. And when you have really good pitching and really good defense, it should allow your offense to play with great confidence. I thought we played well tonight. It was a good night for the Tigers on offense.

Q. For Danny, when he first got here, how much do you feel like you had the ability to work on his approach like in game, how much has that improved

for him?

JAY JOHNSON: We've had a couple of good ones this year. He hit a homer against Mississippi State kind of in the on-deck circle, this is what you need to do, bam, homer. It was kind of the same thing tonight.

He's competitive. And I can relate, when you're as competitive as you are, sometimes your best quality can become your worst enemy as a hitter. I wanted to get him reset for that third at-bat, and he did and he's talented. The other thing, he worked really hard over the last couple of weeks. I want to say it was between Arkansas and South Carolina, he put a lot of time in, like a lot of time. Like he was here all day, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and got some things swing-wise worked out. Then he had his mindset right, had a great series there. Really lifted us there. And obviously lifted us tonight.

Q. When Maverick Rizo is throwing strikes like he did tonight what is he doing well?

JAY JOHNSON: I thought he was dominant. The tempo was good. I called down in the bullpen and I told Champ in the bullpen to get his rhythm and tempo going. So it's almost like I wanted him to throw an inning in the bullpen before he came in and threw an inning to shake off the nerves, any of that stuff.

But he was electric tonight. As good as anybody. He can be as good as anybody in the country throwing the ball like that.

Q. To put D.J. in for that .1 innings and then how much progress have you seen from him, and then also to follow along with Maverick as well?

JAY JOHNSON: So with the nature of the SEC Tournament being single elimination and us finishing as high as we did and getting four byes or whatever it was, we didn't get everybody in the game we wanted to. And I don't think D.J. pitched in South Carolina either. So it's been a couple of weeks.

So we've done a good job over the last couple of weeks of getting guys on the mound here in some simulated game stuff. And the last one he threw is the best that I've ever seen him throw in my life. And that was awesome to come in -- I think he threw four strikes in a row and executed really, really well.

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