

# College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

**Little Rock Trojans**

**Chris Curry**

**Angel Cano**

**Zach Henry**

Postgame Press Conference



Little Rock - 22, Rhode Island - 10

CHRIS CURRY: Once again, proud to be a Little Rock Trojan. Proud of our first regional win in program history. The highest level win in tournament play.

This team, they keep doing firsts. We had an 8-0 streak that was a program first. We won the conference tournament. Now we've got a regional win. You've got to get to regional to learn how to win a regional. Then you've got to get to a super to learn how to win a super. You've got to get to Omaha to learn how to win in Omaha.

I'm just proud of these guys after a tough night last night against a really good team. I think it epitomizes who they've been all year, able to get off the mat, resilient, and come out today and do what they did, especially offensively. We knew that Rhode Island, who has a great ball club, especially offensively, one of the best offenses in the country -- we knew it was going to take some offense to hang with them and win.

Thankful that we were able to keep adding on and then hang on. Proud of these guys.

**Q. Question for both players. What drew you guys to Little Rock to come play for Coach Curry and to be a Trojan? What was it about the recruiting that made you guys get there and have the success that you're having right now?**

ANGEL CANO: This guy right here, I mean, the coaching staff is just great people. It's just everything that -- the plan that he had and everything is just why I took it. They gave me a chance, I took it, and I'm just happy to be here.

ZACH HENRY: I played at UTA with Coach Cox, the

pitching coach, and then we got new coaches, all that. I was actually going to hang them up until they gave me a call to come play a fifth year, and I'm glad I did.

CHRIS CURRY: I could give you a little more context on these guys. Angel, originally from Colombia, played at junior college and was committed to another Power 4 program, then had an unfortunate injury on the field and became available.

Then our recruiting coordinator, Matt Parker, when we hired him this summer, said, hey, I know where a power hitting first baseman is. We were able to get Angel here. What a great student, what a great person. I'm very proud of him.

Then Coach Brady Cox is young enough that he actually played with Zach at UTA. As, I believe, a grad transfer, our academic staff did a great job of getting him over into school. Battled through some injuries, both these guys have been banged up different ways.

Our season started to go a lot better when both of them finally got healthy. I'm proud of these men. They did a great job today.

**Q. I have a question for Zach. After the game last night, how do you bounce back? Today the team looked like the one that was at the conference tournament. You came back so well. Tell me about the process, how that happens.**

ZACH HENRY: After a tough loss against a good team like that, just got to get a good night's sleep, wake up, get breakfast, and then our backs are against the wall. We've just got to give it all out on the field and go from there.

**Q. What about the confidence level? It looks like you had it today.**

ZACH HENRY: Confidence-wise, I feel like in this game you just -- to be able to play as good as you want to, you have to have the confidence. If you don't have the confidence in yourself, then you won't be able to do the things you want to do.



**Q. Angel, I wanted to ask you about that home run. I thought that home run created the separation for you guys to really close it out. Tell me about that home run.**

ANGEL CANO: Just trying to get a good pitch to put a bat on ball. It happened. Just glad it happened. Just trying to help the team win.

CHRIS CURRY: I agree with you. I think that swing was the separator. If you look at each inning, when they scored, great offense, we answered each time, especially there in the fourth and the fifth. Then we added on, and then we got a shutdown inning by Brody Bunting.

We were obviously trying to find a way to slow their great offense down and handed the ball to Brody. He was a weekend starter earlier in the year. He's got really good stuff. We needed someone to just throw the ball over the plate and attack while our offense could create separation.

Angel had a big game-tying hit in the OVC Tournament Championship and another big, big hit tonight.

**Q. Angel, I just wanted to ask, when you're going back and forth and there's so many runs being scored, I guess what are the conversations like in the dugout? And how much confidence do you get seeing your teammates go up kind of continuing to pass the bat the way you all did?**

ANGEL CANO: Just sticking with the plan. It's just every pitch is a battle. Pitch by pitch, out by out, inning by inning. We don't want to stop. We just want to have fun, enjoy the game, and just go out there and give it all up.

**Q. Zach, to be a part of a historic team, to do something that Little Rock has never done, what does it mean to you to be a part that have?**

ZACH HENRY: It means everything to me. This is my last year, and I'm so grateful we made a regional, won a championship. I hope tomorrow's not our last game.

**Q. After last night to be able to regroup the way you guys did, I know that's been the theme of the last few weeks, but to see the way you responded to adversity, just how proud are you of them for that?**

CHRIS CURRY: I believe it's Troy Tulowitzki who had a quote we really liked a week or so ago about, how do you recover when you have a tough loss? He said, you shower well, you wash it off. Coach Bertman used to say you flush it, and you move on.

One thing I have learned about coaching these young men who are 18 to 22 years old, they'll move on if you let them. They'll hang onto it if you hang onto it as a coach.

I don't sleep. I don't eat. I don't do anything when we lose. These guys, they care immensely, but they're young. They're ready to move on to the next day. I've learned that, if I'll move on and let it go, they will do the same thing. That's the message.

Once they've seen themselves do it enough times and know that after a tough loss they can bounce back, you just kind of pull out the playbook and say, hey, remember how you did that last time? We're just going to do that this time.

It's toughness, how much have you been through and keep going, and that's a credit to them.

**Q. I live here in Baton Rouge now, and I grew up in Arkansas, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Growing up, you look around the state, and it's always been the Razorbacks. Like you said today, you guys for the first time, big program, big victory. What's it been like for you to put the state and the whole region on notice in terms of this program? What has this process been like for you to build this program up in Little Rock?**

CHRIS CURRY: I'm born and raised in the state of Arkansas. I've always wanted baseball in the state of Arkansas to grow. There's room for championship programs in the state of Arkansas.

I want to make sure that this program here in Little Rock expects to be in regionals, expects to win championships, and has that mentality. I think we have great baseball coaches all over the state. You've got a very good one at Pine Bluff. So any time we square off, it's always good baseball.

I want the state of Arkansas to be known as a very highly competitive baseball state, and I want Little Rock to be known as a tough baseball school.

**Q. I wanted to ask about that quick start. How important was it to go and put up a big number like you did in the second inning to kind of set the tone for today?**

CHRIS CURRY: Going back to the OVC Tournament, that was the key to those wins. We had a 5 spot, a 6 spot, a 5 spot early. That gives a little cushion to allow our pitchers to breathe a little bit. They don't have to be perfect. Again, we knew that Rhode Island's offense was powerful and explosive, and we didn't have to panic when they made a

run back at us like they did in the second inning.

You just start seeing the swings free up a little bit more. Early on, Angel had the big home run and we had some base hits, but these runs here were manufactured with two outs. Started with a hit by pitch by Ty Rhoades. Sammy Harris gets put back in the lineup because we really liked the matchup of his swing. He hits a home run. We had a safety squeeze by Reed Willbanks. We stole some bases.

So I'm happy with the way that our offense today was dynamic with short game, power, running the bases. I thought, except for one time where we overran first base, we ran the bases well. I don't believe we had an error. Those were keys.

To your point, getting out early just kind of makes everybody exhale a little bit and play more free. When you're coming from behind, it's tougher to do those things in your offense.

**Q. Talk to me about the level of your conference, the Ohio Valley Conference, how it's prepared you to get to this point, the success that you've had. Just let people know out there what type of conference it is and how tough it is for you guys.**

CHRIS CURRY: It's our third year in the Ohio Valley. We came from the Sun Belt, which is a juggernaut of a league. We competed near the top of the Sun Belt when we were in it. We had two or three top three finishes and a couple of players of the year. If you look back to last year, our tournament champion went to the final game, at least won two games. You guys will have to fact check me on that.

It's a gritty, tough league. The parks are, they have a lot of character. You have to understand how to play on the road. They're very good baseball coaches. That kind of game felt a little bit like an OVC maybe Sunday game, where it's back and forth, and you cannot stop scoring. You've got to get into their bullpen and not let up.

We knew, when I played for Jim Case at Mississippi State and then he moved to Jacksonville State in Alabama, they won the OVC a few times, and I asked Coach what it was like, and he said, it is a tough league. You're not going to go into that league and just run through it. Great coaches, great players, some Big Leaguers, some guys get drafted out of there. We're proud to represent our league.

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