

2022 College World Series

Sunday, June 19, 2022

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach David Pierce

Murphy Stehly

Austin Todd

Postgame Press Conference



Texas A&M - 10, Texas - 2

DAVID PIERCE: Well, honestly, I'm a little numb right now. A lot of emotions. A lot of thoughts. It's not even about today's game; it's much more about ending this season with an incredible group of young men that gave their heart and souls to our entire program, to each other, to coaches, to support staff. Very reciprocated by the coaches and support staff. The Aggies were better than us today.

It's just pretty much a struggle. We didn't feel like we played as well as we can the last two games. A lot of good teams. What an incredible run.

But it's over. And I just am so proud of these guys. Far left, Austin, and what he's meant to this program. He's handled himself. How he's fought through adversity. How he's come back from so many injuries, and just been a guy, just been a teammate.

And Murph, what a story, what an absolute crazy, incredible story for Murph, coming in as a utility guy that was supposed to be that and turning himself into an All-American and hitting behind the best player in college baseball all year. And I'm so proud of him and what he means to this program and to his teammates.

And all of them. They were -- just every day they inspired us. Every day they inspired us to come to the office and try to get better. And just really proud of them.

Q. Austin, like Coach said, everything you've been through to get back to this point, what are your emotions right now, as the season ends?

AUSTIN TODD: I mean, obviously we all had the same goal and that was to have a dog pile at the end. I don't think it's really truly hit me yet. I mean, we fight for this and this is everything that we worked for. And it's just one of

those things that we didn't get it done today.

And we'll be all right. We'll be right back to there. I know Coach Pierce will do a great job next year and get us back.

Q. Do you guys feel like you were pressing at the plate? Because you all just kind of been tearing through the Regional and Super Regional. What do you think it was with the hitting?

MURPHY STEHLY: It's hard to think about that right now. But we had a good approach. Stayed with our approach all year. It's worked for us. They made good pitches. But today they were better than us today.

AUSTIN TODD: Like Murphy said, we had an approach, and it's worked for us all year. We stuck with it. And they made some pitches and we just didn't get the big hits at times.

Q. Talk about playing just Texas A&M, having that rivalry back. Obviously not the outcome you guys wanted, but going in towards the future, how does it feel to have Texas, Texas A&M heading to the SEC together?

AUSTIN TODD: I think that atmosphere and the fans love it. We as players love it, too. It's a rivalry in-state. I think it's going to be good for the game.

And I know that we're excited to whenever we do have that three-game series with them, it's going to be a packed house and we're ready to go for it.

MURPHY STEHLY: I know the rivalry runs deep. There's a lot of history behind it. I didn't grow up with it, from being from California, but I know the tradition behind it. And it's a great rivalry. But unfortunately we didn't come up with it today.

Q. You mentioned after Notre Dame you never got any momentum, never really got into a groove. It seemed to happen again today. Was the team just kind of pressing these two games? And obviously it's great competition and you didn't get great starting pitching

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either, so ...

DAVID PIERCE: I mean, I thought we had momentum early in the game. We grabbed one in the first, I think one in the second. You just -- overcoming big innings has been the story of the last three months. And that popped us today.

And I think it just has worn on the position players and feel like at that point just constantly playing uphill. Maybe it just caught up to us, that feeling. We spent a lot of time standing on the field today.

Q. How much was A&M's ability to work deep in counts, foul off a lot of pitches, force a lot of pitches, to their overall offense?

DAVID PIERCE: They've got a good offense no doubt. Done a heck of a job with them. I just, early in the game I didn't think we made pitches. They fouled off some bad pitches. But not to discredit their efforts and discredit their fight at home plate, but we had opportunity to put guys away and we didn't.

Q. Going off that, how disappointed were you that you guys just couldn't get that third strike in a lot of cases early on?

DAVID PIERCE: Like I said, I'll tell you guys this, this team has fought so hard to get here, because, honestly, we've been fighting to get our roles set and it's been a work in progress for literally three months. And so their accomplishments of getting here, hats off to just not giving in. But we pitched behind, and when we got ahead we didn't have a wipeout pitch to move to the next hitter. I think that was the story of the game, to be honest with you.

Q. What do you take from this season? You ended up in Omaha again. What do you look forward to for the next season and the seasons to come?

DAVID PIERCE: I hadn't thought about that too much. But I will say that this group has been in Omaha three out of the last four years. And that's, even at the University of Texas, you can't take that for granted. It's hard to get here. Definitely even harder to win.

But it's really tough to sustain what our program has sustained. And I'm just proud of that group. Since the COVID year, I think we've played 17 games, won 14 of those. And then we've won 50 and 47 games over 111 games and that two-year-and-short period.

So these kids have just been incredible of just how they really worked and the routines and loved being at the

ballpark. They really have been remarkable. And you watch it every single day. And to watch kids go take ground balls on their own where a lot of kids want to go hit in the cage. And just helping each other and being so receptive to coaching.

And, like I said, I'm a little numb right now. A little kind of just don't know what to say because I don't think anybody was really ready to end this thing. Unless you win it all, though, you're going to feel this feeling. And I'll take this any day as opposed to not competing for the national championship.

So I'm just so proud of our guys. And it's just frustrating because we didn't play well the last two games. But it took a lot to get here for our team.

Q. Obviously that environment out there was awesome for college baseball. You had Texas A&M fans and Texas fans going at it, a lot of fun. Talk about that. When you get to the SEC in two or three years, talk about that and how that's going to grow the game of college baseball?

DAVID PIERCE: The state of college baseball is outstanding now. And what's happening with facilities and fan bases getting behind programs, and ours has been awesome, off the charts this year. We shattered attendance records at the Dish.

And then to come here, a lot of brand names and a lot of support. Had 25,000 fans the last two games that we played. And I think it's just going to continue.

And then you look across the country, a team like Notre Dame that has taken that next step. So it's just not in the South, Southeast. It's all over the country. And there's opportunity.

I just think the state of college baseball is good. We need to keep making it better. And we need to keep making right decisions for our student-athletes to have this type of experience, not only here, but on campuses.

Q. Looking at A&M's offense is it frustrating going against them offensively when they'll take any pitch imaginable, you'll have a four-and-a-half hour game. Is it almost tough to lock in against a lineup like that?

DAVID PIERCE: Yeah, but going into it, I think you've got to force that. In other words, you've got to put the pressure on them by pounding the strike zone. If they hit it, you move on. But just quality pitches is the key.

They do have a very good offense. Well-coached. They

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can score in different ways. But it's always tough when the guys grind it out. I look at Douglas Hodo's at-bat there in the eighth, and the last hitter that Palisch faced. Those type of at-bats wear on you.

Werner's hit bat in second, deep in the count, fouled off the fastball, had some length in his swing and stayed on a change-up. And wasn't that bad of a pitch. That's how it happens.

The whole key is pass that playing defense and not letting that happen. Knowing they're going to hit and score but minimizing and really just minimizing the inning.

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