

# 2022 College World Series

Sunday, June 19, 2022

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Skip Johnson

Tanner Tredaway

Wallace Clark

Cade Horton

Postgame Press Conference



PG -- they all make great plays for me and that makes it easy to challenge up the hitter.

**Q. Cade, it looked like you had a lot of success with -- I guess all your stuff tonight. Looked like it was a slider and your curveball going. Curious if you could take us through the development of your arsenal as you worked your way back from surgery this spring?**

CADE HORTON: The slider, I developed it Tuesday to -- Tuesday prior to the Big 12 Championship game. And Ben Abram is the one who really helped me develop. He gave me the confidence to throw it in a game. And it's been working ever since.

**Q. Tanner, about your two-strike approach, seems like you guys have been really hot and done really well swinging the bats with two strikes right now?**

TANNER TREDAWAY: That's kind of our motto. We want to battle for our team, especially with runners on in scoring position and stuff like that. A lot of us -- I know I do, choke up a little bit, just try to keep it short. And at that point that at-bat's for your team with two strikes.

And that's what we try to do, just try to put it in play. And I was able to do that today.

WALLACE CLARK: With two strikes, obviously from both sides of the plate I have a similar approach. Left side and right side, choke up and just try and battle and fight for good pitches and see one pitch at a time and then see where the ball goes and go from there.

**Q. Wallace you're one of the few freshmen on this team that's had a big impact for your team this year. At what point did you realize that this freshman class was going to be able to have the type of impact you guys have had so far?**

WALLACE CLARK: I kind of knew whenever we got here in the fall and we all started doing the fall ball scrimmages and everything, and everyone was competing from day one and everybody showed a lot of promise. And just from the very beginning I knew we had a special class in the making

Oklahoma - 6, Notre Dame - 2

SKIP JOHNSON: I thought Cade really set the tone early and took the momentum from the first inning, had a really solid first inning. Played really good defense. Had competitive bats offensively, just a team full of Davids.

Reggie said it best in our meeting at the end, Godman coming in at the end, the guy hadn't thrown, facing the giant he hadn't thrown in a while, came in and did what he did.

And Sebastian biding his time, getting a pinch-hit here and everywhere. And all of a sudden Brett Squires gets hit the other day, breaks his hand and comes in. I think our kids are more excited for those two guys than they were winning the game.

And that's the culture of our team. They care for each other so much and I'm really proud of them.

Hats off to Notre Dame. They had a really good club navigating through their lineup is tough. So here we are.

**Q. Cade, the first pitch of the game, Blake goes into the dugout to catch a ball. You saw that happen last week as well at Virginia Tech. How much did that settle you down, if at all? And then the defense that began to be played behind him?**

CADE HORTON: I mean, that was a spectacular play. And I feel like I'm honestly at this point starting to get spoiled by all these great catches. But, no, that did settle me down and made me more comfortable.

This defense behind me is incredible. Wally's always making plays. Tanner's making plays. KP, Blake tonight,



right now.

**Q. Wallace, that fifth inning there, walk me through that bunt and kind of what followed after?**

WALLACE CLARK: So, obviously got the bunt sign. And got the sac bunt with a runner on third. Push side's to the first-base side and executed it. Went in the right spot and just started running, I saw the ball get past the first baseman, I just took off. And a couple of guys came across the plate. That's about it.

**Q. One more game and you're playing in the championship series. Was there a point where you felt like this team did something, got to a point where that was a possibility, where you guys stand on the precipice of playing for a national championship?**

TANNER TREDAWAY: I think we've always thought that ever since we got started and got rolling in the Big 12 Championship. I've said it before, I'll say it again, our thing is we want to prove people wrong and make a statement, and we were able to do that in Regionals and Supers, and we want to do that here.

And so yeah, to us it's kind of an expectation to do well. And we're rolling right now and we're going to keep riding it.

CADE HORTON: To back up Tanner with that, I feel with our team we're good at not looking ahead. We're good at staying in the moment and focusing on winning a pitch instead of focusing on the bigger picture.

We focus on the task at hand, and I think that's where a lot of our successes came from.

WALLACE CLARK: I also agree with what those guys said. Winning the national championship's always been kind of the goal. And we've had that in mind from the very beginning and it's not just a new idea.

Even after, like, a loss and a mid-week game, in the front half of the season we had talks with Skip and Reggie and everybody, and the idea behind was it doesn't matter if we lost here, we're still going to go win the whole damn thing.

**Q. Tanner, I asked you during the Big 12 Tournament about the hot stretch you were on at the time. We're a month later and it's still going. Put in perspective what this stretch has been like -- the second half of the season for you, batting average climbing toward .400. Everything is working for you at the plate. Put it in perspective what's going so well for you?**

TANNER TREDAWAY: I really like to keep things simple. I get in patterns like this where I can go on a long stretch and do pretty well.

I just try to swing at good pitches, try not to get out of my zone. The two-strike approach has been really good, really key for me the last couple of weeks. I think that's helped me tremendously. But, yeah, I'm just trying to hit good pitches and do my thing and be on time, more than anything.

**Q. I want to take you back to the squeeze play that turned into two runs and three bases for you. Do you view that type of play as emblematic of this team's approach as a whole -- just execute your job and waiting for the opponent to blink?**

WALLACE CLARK: Yeah, we strive, we emphasize kind of executing and doing your job. And once you do that everything will fall into place. And I was able to do that today.

**Q. Was tonight an example of where Oklahoma showed all phases of its game, what got you here? And how important was it when you got to this stage that you remain yourselves, that you remain the team that ...**

SKIP JOHNSON: That's our identity to try and create as much chaos as we can on the offensive side. And our pitching's got a little bit better every time we went out. And I think our offense has really helped our pitching. It's kind of helped those guys just continue to attack, and our defense has gotten better. We talk about getting better weekly.

**Q. How important was it that once you got here...**

SKIP JOHNSON: I said it in the first press conference, I can remember Coach Garrido talking about the team that gets the most comfortable when they get here they play good. And we've kind of played our two games real aggressive.

It's like I said, we talked at the end and Reggie said really proud of those two kids -- Godman and what Sebastian Orduno did is pretty incredible, coming back. And I kept telling Godman, he's got a really good arm, he's really talented.

I kept saying, finish the race, finish the race, continue to grow. And pretty selfless of him to go out there and do what he did tonight.

**Q. Tell me about the impact that Reggie Willits has**



**had on your offense this postseason.**

SKIP JOHNSON: I think it gave them an identity, I think. That's what Reggie has done. He's detail oriented. And the biggest thing from my standpoint is what they do is they keep attacking. And no matter the fear, getting out at times or whatnot, I think they just keep attacking.

And that's the mindset, because if you take the failure out of the game, it's always there. And if you attack and be aggressive and not worry about the failure, then that's what it's really about. You gave yourself a chance to succeed by trying to fail.

**Q. Talk about the aggression and obviously -- what is it about being able to flush the fourth inning and making the outs over at third. But you live with that. Is that something you can be happy with?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Yeah, that's the momentum of the game we talk about a lot. I thought it, man, we just lost the momentum, put the momentum back on the other side.

But you can take the momentum back with a guy like Cade Horton and what he did. I mean, that guy's got electric stuff at times. He's gotten better every outing. Really proud of him. Continues to work, our strength staff and training staff to get him on the field, after the arm injury 15 months later. And it just shows you what he's about. The guy works and he wants to be great at what he does. And he'll continue to grow.

**Q. Can you just talk about the quality of at-bats from your guys tonight?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Yeah, we talk about that a lot, trying to separate balls from strikes and putting the ball in play, just trying to beat an infielder with two strikes, beat an infielder with two strikes, put the ball in play, make those guys play catch along the way.

They did a great job with it tonight. Notre Dame is a lot like us. And after watching film and studying through all that deal, you could see it. And we knew it going into it. And we made some plays and kept it going, got some big two-strike hits, two-out hits. It was really fun to watch.

**Q. We saw it last week. Saw it again this week. Guys attacking the baseball in the air, flipping, irregardless of safety, they're going into the dugout, going into the bullpen. When you've got athletes all over the field like that making plays, could you talk about how it settles your pitcher down, maybe, and gives guys confidence that maybe they can do the same thing?**

SKIP JOHNSON: They know that they're going to put whatever they have to do to make a play. What he did was incredible. It might not have settled Cade down but it settled me down a little bit when he went over there and caught that ball, because it was an important out.

Every out is important. You've got 27 of them and they're all important. And the faster you can get them, the better it is, believe me.

**Q. How refreshing is it just to hear those players say not looking big picture, sticking with one pitch at a time and that buy-in, that commitment it takes to have that attitude and mentality?**

SKIP JOHNSON: It's really refreshing, because it's what we talk about an awful lot. And sometimes you sit, as a coach, you think they listen or hear you, I don't know which one you're going to say, but they really -- with those guys regurgitating what we talk about, just winning pitches and taking it one pitch at a time is really good.

Really they're just going to play a good game of catch and play against the baseball. It's really not the opponent. We have to attack what we do and really do the things that really make us better, like be aggressive on the bases, throw strike one, make plays, and execute our game plan.

**Q. You talked about Cade's growth since he's come back. Curious if you could elaborate on that, and just what areas have you maybe seen him develop the most over the past six weeks or so?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Aaron, I think he's going to get better. I really don't know if he's ready yet. But his freshman fall was incredible. I mean, we're just throwing two innings a week and he's also playing position.

And I said it to several people, one of the best freshman pitchers I've been around, ever. And I can remember things that he did in that fall like it was yesterday. And then all of a sudden the adversity hits him and he really started working. At first it was tough on him, and we kept taking him, it was early enough that we could take him on our trips.

Then we started taking even our 30-man roster to conference games. That's what people don't understand.

You have a 27-man roster, you have 30-man roster, you have a guy that gets hurt and you limit those guys from traveling with you. You don't really get to see them or be around them.

This game's built around relationships. The only reason

I'm sitting in front of you guys today as the head coach of the University of Oklahoma is totally about relationships.

And to see what that guy did and what he's done with our training staff going in there and doing the work every day with our physical therapist and Luke and Tim to get him where he's at today has been incredible.

**Q. With the position that you're in, how big is it to get an extra day of rest; you don't have one day of rest but you have two days of rest now, and you're not playing until Wednesday?**

SKIP JOHNSON: It's kind of funny you say that. I can remember talking to Clayton Kershaw. He would tell me, call me at 6:00 in the morning. I'm like, what do you mean call you at 6:00 in the morning?

He said the adrenaline that he pitched in a game, one game, would keep him up. And then he went to bed like seven, 8:00 to settle him down. And that's what is important for those guys to get their rest it's very important because the adrenaline in that game right there, it will keep them up whether they like it or not. And all the things that we talk on our wagon wheel of success is, one is nutrition, one is sleep. One is water. One's lifting weights.

And then getting them out of the hotel and doing a little exercise, whether it's taking BP or whatever we're going to do, just try to get those guys grounded and together.

Because it's like if you have a box full of BBs, and you just throw them this time of year and all of a sudden they go everywhere when you are here.

You have to just bring them back together and do a wellness check every time. That's what Ryan Gaines, our operation guy is the best in the business at. He brings all those BBs together and all the support that he has from Greg Tipton to Kendall Mayer, to our whole staff, putting those guys together and trying to keep those guys grounded day in, day out.

**Q. Cade talked about the slider development. How impressive is it to you that a guy could develop that type quality of pitch in the timeframe that he has?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Well, when you see the good ones -- when you see a guy with that ability and those guys can really pick them up really quick. The frustrating thing is they start trying too hard try to make guys swing and miss.

And you see the culture of our team. Ben's been down there. I taught him how to throw a slider.

When you see your teammates teaching each other and not really caring what the outcome of it is but they're really teaching each other, that's when you really have a great culture.

And sometimes it will get out of hand. They'll get mad at each other, too, which is great. We're all brothers; we get mad at each other. I think that's great.

I think with his ability, I think he could pick it up really fast. It's no different than watching a Big Leaguer, how quick they can pick stuff up. And I'm not saying he's a Big Leaguer, by no means, but he'll have that opportunity one day.

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