

# 2022 College World Series

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Auburn Tigers**

**Coach Butch Thompson**

**Carson Skipper**

**Brody Moore**

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas - 11, Auburn - 1

**BUTCH THOMPSON:** My first thought is just an exceptional group of people that make up Auburn, especially this baseball team. I didn't want this ride to end. I enjoyed getting up every morning and being fortunate enough to be with this group.

I think the two losses we had, we scored one run in each game. That was going to be a challenge. Down the stretch, we had to tip our hat to too many starting pitchers.

Conversely, I think it's 10-plus runs that we gave up with two outs, and those third and fourth innings were too much to overcome. You extend an inning for a team like Arkansas at this stage, it kept happening.

So we had some sun, some two strikes and I thought that field was in a unique playing position, they just kept putting the ball in play and good things happened while we were still trying to put the bat on the ball.

These two guys right next to me are two of my strongest men and people, and there's a whole locker room full of it. We'll just start the next 48 hours spending a lot of time with them and continuing the good work. And hopefully we stair-step this program, and we can keep fighting and having the feeling the best is yet to come.

**Q. What's it mean for you guys to get back here again, to be here twice in really three college baseball seasons and to leave the program in such good shape?**

**BRODY MOORE:** It's pretty cool. But obviously we didn't get it done. And what you said is a testament to this man right here. He's a great leader and one of the best leaders I've ever played for. I wouldn't have it any other way.

**CARSON SKIPPER:** A lot of people can say that coming to Omaha is a once-in-a-lifetime, but for me, Brody and Kason and all the other guys that have been here twice, it's an incredible feeling to be able to come to a place with such joy and happiness to the whole college baseball world more than one time.

And all that stems from Coach Thompson. Great leader. Great man. Along with all the other coaches and staff members, everybody from top to bottom has made such an impact on me personally. And I know for all the other guys it's made a big impact on them, too.

**Q. Brody, I'm curious what made Will McEntire, the Arkansas starter, so tough to hit tonight?**

**BRODY MOORE:** I think he had all his pitches working for him. I think wherever Turner put his glove, that's where the ball was going. I thought he had really good command, and didn't make as many mistakes as a starting pitcher usually does. And just he spotted up really well and all his pitches were working well for him tonight.

**Q. This group of seniors they made it to Omaha twice. They had the COVID season. What will you remember most about this group of guys when you look back at this team?**

**BUTCH THOMPSON:** Just how they grew as much as men as much as ball players. And they were a joy. You didn't have to do much this year to get them going or keep them going or get them to bounce back. I thought they had a resilient quality about them. And their ability to bounce back if we had an opportunity to play tomorrow I feel we're in pretty good shape because of the leadership of that group.

But a lot of these guys will move on and do amazing things. We have some young guys that will absolutely benefit from this experience this year. But this was one of the easiest groups to tell them a mission or give them a challenge and then try go attack it. That's just a special group of guys led by a lot of our older guys, especially those two that were right here next to me.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to get your thoughts on the state of the program going forward.**

BUTCH THOMPSON: We just kind of work hard every day and try to make the right decisions every day. And we wake up and that's the one thing you can do to make it stronger and better, such competitive space. I'm not sure I'm the judge of that. I'm part of it. So your head's down. It has to be observed from somewhere else.

These are always hard. I can just imagine in '19 or in every season it's like you need a minute. The first thing I had to do was meet with every coach and every player and then figure out where I've got to be in two days. And this was year 30. So Robert and I sit down, the future and coaching and what do you want to do.

But I absolutely know you can look at pen to paper from the time we've been here to this second and see some growth and stair-steps and continuing to be able to do that with our program.

But I also think there's some people out doing some amazing things that have left the program the last few years. So I'm thankful for it. But I'm part of it. I absolutely think we are on the cusp of doing amazing things consistently. And that will be the driving force to try to leave this program in a better place.

**Q. You talked yesterday about how you guys kind of got some goofy baseball, maybe to jump-start you a little bit in the middle of that game. But today maybe just not an opportunity to even put much into action there against McEntire. You think your offense kind of was fighting it out here a little bit maybe than you hoped for, I assume?**

BUTCH THOMPSON: I thought it was happening at Oregon State a little bit, too. We were so unconscious, kind of mindless in the Regional, just swing, swing. Didn't get a lot of breaks. And we didn't make our breaks.

I thought yesterday we rose up and fought after trying to engage a little bit. But the two losses we had to tip our hat to too many pitchers there down the stretch. It's win, loss, win, loss.

And so that was disappointing because I know what we're capable of from that aspect and would have had to do it to continue in this tournament; didn't happen. And then Arkansas was just engaged. It's like you just can't allow them to keep getting extended at-bats.

And we were trying to put them away but they were fortunate; a lot of things fell for them, but when the inning

got extended they had the big hit to go with it. That wound up to be too much for us today.

**Q. Your veterans and transfers and newcomers, all those guys bonded early. To see those guys after that game, how close they were, what does it mean to you?**

BUTCH THOMPSON: It means everything. This will be an experience -- we try to tell them we want to do everything we can to create the best experience of your life. I think in a lot of instances already hearing from the players initially, I think they appreciate it and they know how our administration, our university and our fans gave them the royal treatment this year.

And I thought they did their part in saying "thank you." And our hardest workers are probably our managers. Good time to get off the game and talk about that. Trent Reynolds (phonetic), Bailey Decker (phonetic), Quinn Stromburg (phonetic), Jay Hawley (phonetic), those guys, they're there before, they're washing the guys' clothes.

And every one of these teams has great people like that. The players do so much but they're given so much. They did an amazing job of showing appreciation.

But I just think of our student managers, too, all the work they do and they're probably out there cleaning up and still serving us right now before we can get underway and get out of here. But there's a lot of people, a ton of people that make this thing go.

But I think it was a great experience for every one of us. I think we found a ton of positive stuff out of this season.

**Q. I think Peyton Stovall didn't play in the regular season series. Five hits tonight. What did you think of his performance, what made him a tough out?**

BUTCH THOMPSON: They got in the 4 hole today, the left-handers got the ball through the 4 hole, and we were always a step out of there. I just thought they found holes. He's a talent. I know what he was coming out of high school.

And sometimes you can get a slower start and then be there. They had three or four guys that, I think, two guys that were in our series and are in there now and going for them.

So things change. We probably have some of those same features. Earlier on there were some guys in there, you're doing something different. I think of Bello in the outfield. He was there early, then out and back in there. Just a steady, good, promising player with a bright future that,

he's coming on.

**Q. You might not have seen any of the highlights yesterday, but having Bruce Pearl here and having the support of other coaches in the athletic department, how much does that mean to this program, and how much did that mean to your university?**

BUTCH THOMPSON: Bruce is kind of the face. He's one of our best ambassadors. But I have to call out, from top to bottom, I've heard from all of our coaches. And we have some strong ones. We have a strong group. I think Ralph Spry who was just at Auburn for 25 years in the track and field program. Was an Army Ranger. An amazing, amazing man and friend. And I just can't go down the list because it would be all of our head coaches. It's the tightest group I've ever been part of. And they've been so supportive. I think of Johnnie Harris, for sure, our women's basketball coach.

Every time we go back to campus and every time we turn around and head back out for the next step, she would be at Plainsman Park there with us. I want to give her a shout out.

I think it's top to bottom, across the board. Allen Greene, Brant Ust, our AD and our sport administrator, have been with us on this entire trip. That's meaningful to a coach, that support, that backing.

But our head coaches at Auburn, I tip my hat to them. They've absolutely -- I think everybody on our campus has just appreciated this team. I don't know why. There's been other quality teams. But just got up and behind this team. And I think this team united a lot of us on campus this year.

**Q. Coming in tonight, four of the last five are members of the Southeastern Conference, talk about how much talent there is in the SEC and how challenging it is to get to the SEC and throughout the year?**

BUTCH THOMPSON: I think it's a preparation feature. And yeah, the two losses we had here were to SEC opponents. I thought the team that Stanford put on the field yesterday was like a Major League ballclub in some aspects. The body's athleticism, the quality of arms we saw, especially left-handed, the experience at Oregon State.

Just tremendous. UCLA will have one of the best teams in the country. You don't miss on them. They have so many of those special freshmen and they're about to hook it up, and Coach Savage's team is going to be outstanding.

But I do, I think our league is absolutely invested from top

to bottom in every one of our schools and that preparation of going through those 10 SEC weekends, absolutely, is a benefit. I don't think there's any doubt about it, with having to play the level of play consistency every week, you feel like you're home, you're on the road. The venues even prepare you for this in such a way.

I think we had 93 former SEC baseball players on Major League opening day rosters this year. It's just incredible.

So that's a pretty good track record. But I think it's playing those 10 SEC weekends with no breaks there. If you can withstand, if you don't get buried, and it's a year where you're right above the .500 mark, you can do anything.

I think our '19 team that wound up making it here was 14 and 16 in our league, and I think it's just proof of what those 10 weeks, how it prepares you.

**Q. At the beginning of the year, you came out and talked about the operation atmosphere and trying to get people excited about baseball. And you could feel the vibes, especially in the Regional round. You could feel the vibes around the program. Everybody was excited. A lot of fans out, a lot of people supporting the team. I wanted to get your thoughts about that and how it went this year.**

BUTCH THOMPSON: I just doubled down and believed in what we're doing. I doubled down, wanted people to be there. I didn't know a hundred percent sure that would end, our last game would be hosting a Regional there.

But sometimes you just bet on yourself and your program and you try to double down on it. You ask some people, can we do XYZ? Can we do a few things? And everybody said absolutely. So team effort across the board.

And we sold the most season tickets for our program, exceeded '20 after the '19 College World Series team, after coming off a tough year last year, we exceeded the '20 mark. Sold more tickets in history of our program.

A lot of people stepped up to the plate for this team before we ever played a game. I'll never forget that. I appreciate that. You know what, I thought our team rewarded them at the end. And I thought that was a nice organic event for us by doing the operation atmosphere to where they stepped up to the plate for us, and I thought we returned the favor there at the end of the postseason.

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