

2023 Men's College World Series

Thursday, June 15, 2023

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Oral Roberts Golden Eagles

Coach Ryan Folmar

Cade Denton

Jake McMurray

Press Conference



CADE DENTON: Obviously it's a completely different feeling. We played 15 minutes down the road. Jake has played 15 minutes down the road countless numbers of times. I probably played down the road three or four times.

So actually being here in downtown Omaha, getting to come inside the stadium, it's a completely different feeling than what we've had before, but obviously the surroundings around us aren't too unfamiliar.

So I think we're going to have a lot of fun here, and it's going to be a great place to play.

JAKE McMURRAY: This is actually our third trip to Omaha this year: Once to play ONU, and then we played NDSU, technically in Council Bluffs, but we stayed in Omaha because of weather.

We've been here before. Not necessarily at this stage, but we feel comfortable here. Just the city has been embracing us a lot. We know on the way to dinner last night we had a lot of people come up to us and say, "We're rooting for you, you guys can do this."

The city has been great, and I think our guys are comfortable here.

Q. This question is for you, Jake. You really hit a hot streak late in the season, especially on the Oregon regional when you had seven hits, six RBIs. How do you plan on continuing that hot hitting here in Omaha?

JAKE McMURRAY: Just not trying to do too much. Just trying to stay in my approach, pass the stick to the next guy, see if we can get more runs on the board. That's the main goal, just trying to score.

Q. Cade and Jake, from y'all's perspective, what has been the secret to this team's success?

THE MODERATOR: Jake, you start.

JAKE McMURRAY: I think Folmar touched on it a little bit. We're a resilient group, tough group, but the main thing for

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with a statement from Coach Folmar and then have questions directed to student-athletes. 50-12 on the season. Coach Folmar, give us an overview. Welcome to Omaha.

RYAN FOLMAR: An overview of welcome to Omaha? It might take a while. First and foremost, God is good. I think we are a team that is blessed to be in this position. We're blessed to have this opportunity. We want to thank God for that.

But our team, as most of you have chronicled, has had a different journey than most to get here, a difficult journey to get here. I think the biggest take we've had from our journey is our group and how resilient they are, how tough they are, how disciplined they are to have an opportunity to be here and compete for a national title.

It's special. Hasn't been done at Oral Roberts for quite a long time. I think 45 years is the number. We're excited that a lot of guys from our 1978 College World Series team are going to be in attendance, along with countless alumni and former players that are going to be here as well.

So we're excited to be here. We're blessed to be here. Hopefully we can come out and play well now.

THE MODERATOR: Now questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Cade and Jake, you are one of the few teams that's actually played in Omaha this year. How do you think that kind of benefits since you've had kind of a routine here before?

THE MODERATOR: Cade, you start, please.



me is just this group loves each other, and we play together.

We hustle. We grind out at-bats. We have a great bullpen. Our starting pitching has been fantastic all year, but the main thing for us is just the tight close-knit of this group and how we play for each other and with each other.

CADE DENTON: Yeah, just going on top of that, I think consistency has been our key this year. I can't pick a guy out of our lineup right now that's had a bad streak of at-bats or a bad weekend in forever.

We've had a lot of guys go out and be the same person every single day, give us great at-bats, base hits. Obviously coming out of the bullpen we have probably one of the most diverse bullpens here at the World Series. We have a 6'7" sidearm left-hander, a 5'9", 5'8" --

RYAN FOLMAR: That's pretty generous.

CADE DENTON: Five-foot however, right-handed pitcher who throws the ball, spins the ball well and throws it hard and throws it up in the zone. We have a few other guys who are funky in their deliveries, and then I come in in the back half of it. I think you bring that group together, and I don't think there's a recipe you can come out with that group where there's not going to be success.

There's not a guy out there who I don't trust to go out and throw four innings of shut-out baseball if we need them to.

Like I said, consistency has been our key this year, and I'm ready to see it perform here in Omaha.

Q. Jake, this is a question for you. The gummy worms when you get to first base, where did that kind of come about?

RYAN FOLMAR: It's coming.

Q. Where did it kind of come from, and do you look forward to getting a gummy bear there at first?

JAKE McMURRAY: That whole thing started in Fargo, actually, on our trip to Fargo in 2021. We flew into Minneapolis and bussed four hours to Fargo. If you have ever made that drive, that's not a very fun drive. So there's not that much to do.

I think at this point there was a bunch of these sea shanty things going on TikTok, and we started singing these songs on the bus.

Then by the morning, which Folmar was very enthused

about probably, by the morning we had this full pirate theme going on. Our first base coach, Jimmy, decided that we should get a little treasure if we get a hit and get to first base, and it's just evolved from there.

It's something that our guys like and something that our -- we don't have the pirate theme anymore. Folmar is probably excited about that.

RYAN FOLMAR: I am very excited about that.

JAKE McMURRAY: It's something that our guys love, kind of keep the mood light. And, yes, I very much look forward to getting a Twin Snake whenever you get to first base.

Q. You guys are no stranger to postseason success. Last year you made the regional, which was the first time the school has made it since 2022. You got, I believe, swept. How has that experience, which both of you guys played pretty well in that regional, but weren't able to come up with the victory, how has that experience motivated you guys this year and especially this postseason?

THE MODERATOR: Cade, you start.

CADE DENTON: I think going into that that was a lot of the guys on our team's first regional, with COVID and having one year where Omaha won the conference championship.

So obviously that baseball playoff experience in that atmosphere gives a few guys on this team some more experience than a few of the Juco guys that we have coming in this year.

I think being able to have that, especially with the older guys on our group being able to share those experiences with the guys on the team now, I think that helps a lot with the -- obviously the fan noise and Oregon was crazy.

I think being able to understand that stuff like that is going to happen and that environment doesn't affect you if you don't let it affect you.

I think being able to have that has been a key factor in our success this postseason.

THE MODERATOR: Jake.

JAKE McMURRAY: Cade said it brilliantly, but we had some young guys pitch last year in the regional, Cade included, and guys like Brooks Fowler who pitched in the regional.

As well we have guys like Holden Breeze and Mac McCroskey, Justin Quinn, who played big parts in our regional run last year. We've had some at-bats in the postseason.

This year I feel like just our whole team has really just started to gel towards the end of the year, and we've just been playing with a lot of confidence, and that really does help in the postseason.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse you, guys, and open it up for questions for Ryan.

Q. Coach, what does kind of the scouting report look like, as every team here is elite?

RYAN FOLMAR: Scouting report on us or on somebody else? On somebody else? The scouting report for us becomes very simple. You get to this time of year, and every team is very talented. Every team is well-coached. Every team is hot at the right time of year.

I think the scouting report then goes back to what you do. I think if you get to this point and you try to change your identity or try to change what you do, you're going to be in trouble in a hurry.

So instead of focusing on what somebody else does, I think we're going to focus more on what we do and what we're about. We understand that the talent level when you get to this point is extreme, and everybody is hot at the right time of year.

So it's going to be more about us. It's going to be more about what we do. We believe in our team. We believe in our group. We feel like if we play well, we're going to have an opportunity to go out and win.

Our focus really isn't on anybody else in the field. It's on us. We've got to play well.

Q. You mentioned that everyone is getting hot around this time of year. Arguably no team more so than you guys. You have won basically your last 23 games, and the one you lost you had an eight-run lead at one point. The guys mentioned the team has been gelling together. What else do you think has played a role in this incredible hot streak that you guys have been on for the past two months almost?

RYAN FOLMAR: Yeah, and I think Cade and Jake touched on it a little bit. I thought they both spoke on these things, but as Jake said, this has been the most selfless team that I think I have ever been a part of.

The team chemistry is really good. That's part of it. I think part of it, and Cade mentioned, is the balance to the team and the consistency of this team has been extraordinary throughout the year.

You don't go on one of those runs without having balance to your team. You don't go on one of those runs without being able to win a game in a lot of different ways, and we've been able to do that.

You don't go on one of those runs and not have different ways to go score and win a game. I think we've been able to do a lot of those things, but it comes down to balance, and we feel like we have to have good balance in order to come in here and compete well.

Hopefully that continues throughout the tournament.

Q. I guess I have one more. TCU has also been very good as of late. They're 19-2 since May 1st. They also earlier today talk a lot about sticking together and playing unselfishly, playing as a team. As you mentioned, you have to focus on yourselves, but is there anything in particular about TCU that you think you guys are going to have to stop to get a win here to open the series?

RYAN FOLMAR: I don't know if there's anything we need to stop. I think the most impressive thing for me is you go through TCU and you look at their team, I think the development of their young players throughout the season has been very good.

I think they get to this time of the year because those young players have started to really gel and start to play well and have gained a ton of experience throughout the season.

So I think the biggest thing when you look at them is those young, talented players gaining experience and gaining confidence. So it's a confident group coming in. They've been on a great run just like everybody else in the tournament.

But, again, it comes down to, hey, we have to find a way to play well. We have to find a way to do what we do. We have to find a way to get the ball to some guys at the back end of our bullpen with the game close.

If we do that, we feel like we're going to have an opportunity to win.

Q. Oral Roberts doesn't usually get the big-time recruits. When you go in to find some of these kids that brought you to Omaha, what do you look for for a

player that fits in at Oral Roberts?

RYAN FOLMAR: It's pretty simple. Number one, you look for good people. You look for good kids that are good students, that are good players that have Christian values, that has -- that's going to fit our culture. I think that's a huge part of it. I think that's number one.

I think the second part is in order to win, they better be talented too. They have to have a certain toolset. They have to be good enough players to help us win and win at a high level.

So I think as complicated as you want recruiting to be and as complicated as we make it sometimes, it comes down to good people that are good players.

THE MODERATOR: What's your pitching rotation this week?

RYAN FOLMAR: Jakob Hall will start Game 1. Harley Gollert will go Game 2 on Sunday. We've been fortunate that those two guys have started Game 1 and Game 2 in a series the entire season, so those guys will get the ball again.

Q. You mentioned when recruiting the goal is obviously to get good people who are good players, but your team has arguably been a little underrated. Despite the 51 wins, you guys were only a 4 seed in the regionals. First 4 seed to make it to Omaha since 2012. Is the mentality in the locker room still underdog at this point, or at this point is it just go out there and play to win?

RYAN FOLMAR: I think underdog is a term that maybe other people use. It's not something we look at. It's not something we talk about. We're very confident with our group. We're confident that they're good players, that they're where they're supposed to be. They've played well over a long period of time.

Whether somebody wants to label them underdog, a 4 seed, it really doesn't matter this time of year. It doesn't.

You look at the regional we came through and arguably the toughest regional in the country. There were four really good teams. You could argue that any one of the four could win.

Then you go into a really tough place in Eugene to go play, and you lose Game 1 in the way that we lost it. It's a tough place to come out of there with the series win.

I don't think we're an underdog. I think we're a really good

team, and we're where we're supposed to be.

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