

# 2023 Men's College World Series

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Virginia Cavaliers

Coach Brian O'Connor

Ethan Anderson

Connelly Early

Postgame Press Conference



TCU - 4, Virginia - 3

COACH O'CONNOR: Certainly another great baseball game in this World Series. There's been some terrific games in the first five ball games. I'm sure the fans are loving the close games and the great play out there.

We just fell a little bit short in Omaha. Two one-run losses certainly hurts. I feel for our guys because they've had a terrific year. That said, we didn't win. And that's our goal is to win here in Omaha and give us a chance to win a national championship. And we certainly fell short of that.

TCU did a great job. The starter did a really good job. Our approach was not great against him. But he did a nice job of mixing his off-speed pitches and held us down. And certainly TCU has some powerful arms in their bullpen and did a great job.

I thought Connelly early gave us a nice start. They had a good approach against him in the first inning, probably as good as we've seen all year. That's a credit to them. He grinded, kept us in the game, gave us a chance to win. And everybody we brought in did a nice job.

We just couldn't get that one more big hit that we needed to win here in Omaha. And sometimes -- all the time that's what it comes down to, that big clutch hit or that clutch pitch. And we just didn't get enough of that this weekend.

That said, it doesn't diminish what this team accomplished, to have 50 wins and be playing here in Omaha again, speaks to what they're made of and their talent and the type of program that we have. We'll regroup and look to build and be back here as soon as we possibly can. So thank you.

**Q. Ethan, the offense has been so prolific and productive for most of this season. Was this just a case of running into elite pitching here in Omaha in the two games?**

ETHAN ANDERSON: I don't think the pitching has changed much throughout what we've seen this year. We consistently had a good approach. Today didn't go our way.

**Q. Ethan and Connelly, you're one of only three teams to go the whole season nonconference undefeated. How do you look back on this season?**

CONNELLY EARLY: I thought that's a testament to how good we've played all season. We had two tough losses here. One run apiece. But that doesn't take away from what we did all season. I thought our bats did great and all of our arms did great. We'll come back here next year.

ETHAN ANDERSON: Going undefeated in nonconference, it's just another something special about this team. Everything that being on this team has accomplished throughout the year. It's one of these teams that I'm going to look back, just remember every single guy on this team.

**Q. Ethan, you worked closely with Jake and Kyle these past couple of years. What does it say about their careers and where they are as things look like they've come to an end.**

ETHAN ANDERSON: I've loved every single second of being around them. I roomed with Jake last year in hotels. I roomed with Kyle this year in hotels. Those are two guys that are probably leaving that I'm really close with and I've learned a ton. And the impact that they've had on me and Virginia baseball still kind of setting in that I won't see them next year. But I love those guys.

**Q. Two one-run losses does it make it tougher when you can go back through each game and pick out a play here or a play there knowing it could have swung the whole thing?**

COACH O'CONNOR: Candidly, I hate losing either way, whether it's by one or five. But the one-run games always comes down to, a lot of times, a big pitch, like I said, a clutch hit there maybe in the ninth to tie the game and other opportunities.

Listen, this game was defined, in my opinion, by we had too many one-two-three innings offensively, that we just weren't competitive enough in our approach in those at-bats.

And I thought we did a terrific job managing the innings from a pitching and defensive standpoint. I think TCU probably left 12, 14 runners on base. And that's a testament to our guys that they buckled down and didn't let the big inning happen. And that gave us a chance.

It comes down to those little fine details in Omaha. Everybody has talent. Everybody earned the right to be here. It just comes down to guys rising up in key moments. That doesn't take away from who our players are. Sometimes you just don't do it because your opponent's very talented as well.

**Q. You go double, single within your first five pitches of the game. As those outs started to stack up inning by inning, what did you see in terms of maybe a reason, I guess, that you weren't getting maybe the breaks?**

COACH O'CONNOR: That's a good question. I think it had to do with our approach against their starter. He was throwing a lot of off-speed pitches, and our approach of hitting the ball the other way -- that's what you have to do against somebody like that because he's executing -- and we too many times rolled over ground balls and just didn't get quality swings on the ball to put innings together to put pressure on them.

You saw we stole a couple of bases there against Wright. Our style is to put the pressure on the other team, but you've got to be able to get base runners on in order to do that. There were just too many innings that we just weren't competitive and gave ourselves a chance.

That happens and that's a credit to them for executing and us not adjusting to it.

**Q. You said it's still setting in but how do you sum up the careers for Jake Gelof and Kyle Teel?**

COACH O'CONNOR: I'm disappointed for them that they didn't get a chance to play deeper in this and for the two of them to really show their ability. And, so, here in Omaha,

that said, the careers that those two guys had are right up there with some of the best that we've had in my tenure here.

Jake Gelof has broken so many offensive records, home run records, RBI records. We wouldn't be sitting here today without him.

And Kyle Teel was just a really, really special, talented player. The results didn't show in these two games the impact that those two young men have had in our program and their entire careers, but especially this year. And certainly they will be missed.

But the way they performed in our uniform teaches the younger players what the standard is for success in our program. And for that I'll be forever grateful to them for their contributions wearing our uniform.

**Q. We have a few guys that are going to play for the USA Collegiate National Team, a few guys that are going to play top some collegiate programs. A few guys who are graduating and some guys getting drafted, signing to a Major League organization in the next few weeks. What's the biggest prep for this program for this fall ball season?**

COACH O'CONNOR: Well, certainly we will have to figure out what the draft brings to us. That's something that has a major impact on every college program in a good way. Every college coach wants their guys to get an opportunity at the next level of baseball. That's part of what they work for when they come and play at this level of baseball.

So I'll be rooting for our guys that have that ability for every one of them to have that opportunity. And so we'll get back to Charlottesville and we'll assess what the roster will look like for next year.

Part of that is those players going to Team USA those players going to the Cape and across the country and getting at-bats and working to be improved players.

I look at our team this year, the sophomores on our team that -- we have five in the lineup. And those players all went out last summer for the most part and really developed and got better.

Well, our freshmen this year need to go out and do that. That's how you continue to sustain a high-level program.

And we'll see what additions that we need to make this summer based on what the draft brings us. We have a very talented recruiting class coming in. Then we'll look at what our needs are in the portal and supplement from that

standpoint, and then get ready to go and do it again next fall with the goal of being right back here in Omaha.

**Q. For Jay to come in like he did at the end and take care of business, is that something you think he can build on going into next year?**

COACH O'CONNOR: Yeah, I think so. Jay Woolfolk has a lot of talent. This is the first year that he was required to go to football practice all spring. And I'm sure that took a toll on him a little bit that -- there's not many young men in America that are doing what he was doing -- in the spring, competing for the starting football job and being a pitcher.

There's guys that do it that compete at quarterback, but they're not a pitcher. They're an offensive player and things like that.

So today was great for Jay. Obviously I put him in a challenging situation in the Florida game, but I put him in because I had confidence in him that maybe he'd get a strikeout or ground ball. That's what this situation dictated. But I'm excited for his opportunity with USA this summer. And I think that next year can be a terrific year for him in our uniform.

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