

# 2023 Men's College World Series

Monday, June 19, 2023

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Wake Forest Demon Deacons**

**Coach Tom Walter**

**Camden Minacci**

**Bennett Lee**

**Josh Hartle**

Postgame Press Conference



Came in with a big situation, first and second with one out and a really good hitter in Dugas. And executes a first-pitch slider and then throws a fastball in to get the 5-4-3 and put the momentum in our dugout. It was huge shift in the game.

Really great win. Looking forward to play Wednesday night.

**Q. Cam, when you came out in the eighth inning, what kind of pitches were you looking at to get that double play? And what was going in your mind when you went out in the ninth?**

CAMDEN MINACCI: The pitch plan was to throw a first-pitch slider and then a heater in. That's what we did, just executed our pitch plan, got the guy to roll over, turned a double play.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**

CAMDEN MINACCI: It was heavy spin for sure. That's how we knew we would get to that lineup. So we spun him and just executed pitches.

**Q. Bennett, that eighth inning, both halves of it really you obviously were in the middle of it. If you could take us through the play at the plate from your perspective. And just how difficult was that play because it looked really difficult? And secondly your at-bat there in the bottom of the eighth. What a sequence for you.**

BENNETT LEE: I think it starts with the mound visit we've had. Actually Coach Walter told me to tell Brock to maybe get the out at home if we have it. So that was already in our heads coming into it.

And then Beloso hits a little squibber, and that was actually a really good play by Brock. He said the ball was literally still spinning in his glove when he went to throw it. So just an unbelievable play to get the ball to me.

And from my perspective, I've done millions of picks in my life and I just took over. I got good hands and it just took

Wake Forest - 3, LSU - 2

COACH WALTER: It was a really great baseball game. Two really good college baseball teams battling it out. And a lot of star power in that game, and it didn't disappoint.

Really proud of Josh Hartle and the way he battled. Some things go against him there, kind of a couple of blocks here and there and a ball in left field which probably make a play on.

And all of a sudden down 2-0 but he settled in and got us into the sixth inning there, which was huge to shorten the lead. It was kind of similar to Rhett Lowder's outing the other day. It wasn't a typical Josh Hartle outing, but he battled, and kept coming, kept making pitches when it mattered and kept the score where it was, gave our offense the time to get going.

Really great defensive plays. Obviously the play Bennett Lee made today. Brock Wilken made a great play to get to the ball, and Bennett with an unbelievable pick and tag under pressure. It was a huge play in this ball game.

And then of course the clutch hit by Bennett. Danny Corona doubles with one out and then Bennett -- once again, for the second game in a row, our story was our bullpen. Our bullpen locked it down.

Cole Roland came in, got two huge punch-outs. Massey comes in behind him, gets another big out. And then gets another out the next inning. And then Cam gets the last five outs.



over.

And then the at-bat, got down 0-2. I thought Hurd executed a good slider on the outside corner first pitch. Then I took a really good swing at a hanging slider next pitch, fouled it right back.

Battled, battled, fouled off a heater. Then it was 1-2, I think, and my boots were shaking a little bit. So I was, like, all right, I'm going to go talk to Billy. Get a good hug from Billy. He's like a father figure to all of us. He's got like five kids.

So I went over for some comfort. And then he was just like, hey, man, just find a way to get this ball through. I love you. And it just calmed me down, put me in a good head space for one pitch. And that's what happened.

**Q. Bennett, how does it feel to just be such a workhorse behind this and what you had to do to call a good game tonight and shift from the guys to your right and left that are on the podium right now?**

BENNETT LEE: A lot of credit goes to Moose and the analytics guys. They're the ones who call the game. And then these two right here, I can't speak enough about them, as humans and as pitchers. And makes my job really fun and really easy to work for these guys.

And just being a workhorse, that's what I'm built for. That's what I love to do. I love to be in it every single play and give my all for these guys every single day. So that's all I do. That's what I enjoy. That's why I'm here.

**Q. Cam, the last two weekends Coach Walter has had to put you in situations just to get you work where you're in games, 15-run leads or whatever. What's it been like to flip the those switch the last two games being the most high-pressure situations, the biggest stage in college baseball?**

CAMDEN MINACCI: It's been fun. It's really fun. Obviously you can't complain when you run through a Regional or Super Regional, outscore opponents by 59. I love to get my work in up 16 in a postseason game. I'm not going to complain about that.

But we've been working. We all do a lot of visualization work and we believe. I've seen this a hundred times. I knew there would be a one-run save in Omaha. And we've gotten two. Doesn't change.

I treat those 16-run games like we're up one. It doesn't change. It doesn't change who we play, where we play. Just do the same thing every day. And we believe and

that's why we win.

**Q. Cam, Bennett, you all talked about it a little bit but how your special is your relationship together, especially in the back end of a game that makes these moments?**

BENNETT LEE: It's unbelievable. This guy right here, best friends in high school. Co-captain on our high school team. He's my Catholic confirmation sponsor. I just can't say enough.

And there's no one I'd rather be in the foxhole with battling with 30,000 people screaming at us. And there's just, with him there's just this comfort -- and we both know what's going to happen. When he comes in, the game's over.

CAMDEN MINACCI: He said it best. He's my foxhole guy. Every time I got on the mound we give each other one of these. And at that point we just let our process take over and the results will be what they will be.

We both have worked so hard together. We've had such a great process together. We mold so well together. It's just a lot of fun.

To go from starting games in high school to closing games in college, with him behind the plate, it's kind of a full-circle moment. And it's pretty incredible. I can't say enough about it. It's so much fun.

**Q. So this is my 24th College World Series and I have never -- I mean never -- I'll look you in the eye and say I've never seen a team have this much fun out there. Tell me all about that, all of you, if you would, please.**

JOSH HARTLE: We have a bunch of unwavering faith. Doesn't matter if we're down 10-0 or up 10-0. We're never out of a game. And just kudos to our team. The camaraderie, chemistry with us I think is unbreakable. It's very special and I can't say enough about that.

BENNETT LEE: I think why we started this game is because we love it and because we've built incredible relationships with people. The moment you lose sight of that is when really you've lost sight of the game and what it's really about.

So I think Moose does an incredible job of hammering this into us every day. It's just to celebrate this so much because like you might only come here one time. So we just really try to have a lot of fun and by having a lot of fun you're loose and it allows your abilities to take over. So I love these guys, and it's pretty special.



CAMDEN MINACCI: I'm a big headphones and loud music guy so I'm not always in the mix. But I can tell you without a doubt that watching them as I have my headphones on makes me so comfortable and so confident.

It's what I have to do to get ready. But I watch them have so much fun. And I go out there. How can we lose? Every single guy is having the time of their lives right now. Who can beat us? It seems pretty much impossible. So the amount of fun we have is truly incredible.

**Q. Josh, just want to ask you about your plan today and how you feel like you executed. I know you came out really strong in the first inning, maybe a little bit of laboring there second and third, how were you able to fight through that and get through six innings today?**

JOSH HARTLE: So facing a lineup like LSU, up the top 1-2 punch with Crews and White, I knew I would have to have my stuff, my A stuff, and have a good mix.

I feel I mixed well all game and had some command issues, I battled through that. But just having that unwavering faith. The guy behind me has got my back at all times while I'm coming in, Massey, Cam, any guy. I was just trying to give us as much for as long as I could.

**Q. Your team is 2-0 now in the College World Series and you've led each game for precisely half an inning. How do you pull that off?**

COACH WALTER: Well, first off, our pitching staff keeps us in it and throws up zeros. Again, we got down 2-0 early in both the games, and our staff just kept throwing up 0s after that and we kept making big pitches and kept making plays.

We got helped out with some free passes in both of those games. We had two walks that led to the two runs against Stanford, other than Brock's homer, of course, and then today we had three walks. And they were good walks. They were walks that we earned.

So obviously Floyd was very good today. And he stoned us for five innings, and finally kind of that third time around we felt a little more comfortable.

**Q. For the second straight game, players' conversation with Bill Cilento has led to a game-changing play. What does his presence mean to this team and to you personally?**

COACH WALTER: Well, Bennett said it perfectly. The guys just trust him implicitly. He works hard at the game plan for game prep. In big moments, they go to him

because Billy knows what they can expect, gives them a great sense of calm and confidence in those big moments. And really, when you're playing on a stage like this, this is what it is all about, staying calm and staying within and playing your game. I think for two games we pressed a little early, but as the game wore on and we got more and more into the flow of the game, we've kind of played better as the game's gone on.

**Q. Brock's defense, what's the process been like for the last two years to get him to where he is now and to get him the confidence to where he can make the play throwing to home?**

COACH WALTER: A lot of hard work from Brock. He's changed his athleticism in his time that he's been here has gone from a 7.3 runner to 6.7 runner. He worked on his throwing arm and footwork.

Ty Blankmeyer last year did a really great job with Brock. And Matt Wessinger this year took Brock to a whole new level. He really makes the in play a whole lot better than he used to. That was a really tough chance there.

The ball's spinning away from you like that. You're in foul territory. It would have been amazing for him to throw it the first time, but he had the presence of mind to make sure he had a good grip. And Bennett Lee making an unbelievable play on the back end of that, too.

**Q. Two nights in a row you said maybe you haven't played like the A game. You've kind of had to grind and come up with ways to win in late innings, but again the fact that this team has maintained its poise and been able to grind out these two games, what do you think that says about this group and how have they developed that characteristic?**

COACH WALTER: We talked about it before the tournament started. We do have the ability to win games in different ways because of all our pitching and defense we can win the 3-2 game. Because of our offense, we can win the 8-6, or 10-8 game. That's one of the things I really like about this club.

But it's a veteran club and we've got some toughness to us. That's the one thing -- I said to the guys in the huddle before the game, I said they don't know how tough we are.

We're a tough team, tough minded team. We don't quit. We don't give up. These guys, as you saw when they were talking today, they don't want to let each other down. And that's such a powerful motivator in these situations.

**Q. It seems like on that play that Brock made to**

**Bennett, that he was the only infielder really playing in. But like you had the other infielders maybe playing for the double play, were you going to concede the run had the ball not gone to third?**

COACH WALTER: For sure. When you're the home team, to me, we had six outs to get, we would have taken the double play in the middle, for sure. And just to end the inning there, and hope we score in either the bottom of the eighth or ninth.

Kurtzy would have come home. We had the corners -- both those guys were coming home. If it had been hit in the middle of the infield, Beloso is a double-play candidate, we would have turned a double-play there for sure.

**Q. What did you see from Danny Corona in the bottom of the eighth with that at-bat, and how does that reflect the course of his hitting season?**

COACH WALTER: It's a good question. Before the inning we talked about him bunting, but he's like, I want to hit. I understand you want to hit. But we need to get a runner in scoring position.

And obviously Danny took care of that himself. It was on a breaking ball too. Two fastballs thrown past him the first two, he hung an off-speed pitch and Danny stayed with it. I think in the past Danny -- it would have spun up on Danny and he would have swung through that pitch, but he was able in the moment again to control his emotions, stay back on a good changeup and double down the line.

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