

2023 Men's College World Series

Sunday, June 25, 2023

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Dylan Crews

Gavin Dugas

Postgame Press Conference



And we'll be ready to go tomorrow. So nothing changes for us. We're going to keep playing baseball the way we always do.

DYLAN CREWS: I feel like everybody in the locker room already forgot about it really. We do a pretty good job of that. I think we've only lost back-to-back games twice this year.

So, yeah, everybody's going to be mentally sharp tomorrow, and we're going to do what we've got to do tonight to get our bodies right, and we'll be good for tomorrow.

Q. Yesterday, you guys played a super clean game, especially defensively, only two walks, no errors. Today, six walks, five errors. What do you think happened for that? And how are you guys planning on bouncing back from it tomorrow?

DYLAN CREWS: We've got to clean it up a little bit. Just some mental errors. Those lead to runs and walks do too. So we've been clean throughout this whole playoff route. So it's just one of those little bumps in the road. I think we'll be good tomorrow.

GAVIN DUGAS: This was a crazy game. We'll be ready to go tomorrow. And we'll have our minds right.

Q. Where did you feel like it really went off the rails?

COACH JOHNSON: Probably the sixth. Felt like at 8-3 -- it was 7-3 I believe in the fourth and we had the bases loaded and hit into a double play. Felt like we were fine there.

Credit their relievers. They executed some pitches that made it hard on some guys for us that have been swinging the bat really well. That was a killer, the double play when we had the bases loaded when it was 7-3.

. We still felt okay about it, which is why we sent Gavin back out to the mound. Looking at it, at 8-3, we went to Bryce because he pitched well against them last year, and it was largely the same lineup. It's almost identical. A lot

Florida - 24, LSU - 4

COACH JOHNSON: Tough one, obviously. Really good job by Florida swinging the bat. They've got great players. They played great today.

We got off to a good start offensively. Did a nice job, I thought, with Waldrep. Would have been good to maybe get a two-out hit in either the first or second to put more pressure on them. But we didn't do that.

You have to credit them. It was just an onslaught of good at-bats and barrels. And they're a great team, and they played great today.

Q. Was there a moment when this felt like it was starting to slip away at any point?

DYLAN CREWS: Not really. I guess you could say when it got up to about 20 runs. But we felt like we were in it the whole time, honestly. We made some pretty remarkable comebacks in our career. So it is what it is. At the end of the day, we've just got to move on.

GAVIN DUGAS: To go along with that, our mindset is never to give up and just to stay with the pitch no matter the situation. That's where we were at mentally.

Q. All year long it's been a one-game season, however you want to phrase it. But now it's a one-game season. The ultimate test of that mindset. How do you as team leaders get this team back?

GAVIN DUGAS: Honestly, we're not lost. We're ready to go. We're going to do what we need to do to get ready for tomorrow night. We're going to prepare like we always do.



like ours. That's why we're both here -- two really good teams that have old players that generally play the game the right way.

And he was good in his first inning. Wasn't good in his second. And it kind of snowballed from there.

Q. The natural question is, is Paul Skenes available tomorrow? And who else might be available tomorrow to pitch?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, as I talked about last time, we do a process to figure that out, which we'll do. And that doesn't take place until day of game. So we have to do that with all of them.

You're going on game eight in 10 days. So we have to be mindful of all of that, and we will be. And we'll see who is available.

Q. I apologize for ignoring your warning last night and looking at the wrong side of the fence, but this is 30 runners left on base in two games. I'm wondering if you're seeing a trend that concerns you in the quality of the at-bats that you're having with runners in scoring position?

COACH JOHNSON: You know, I mean, sure, I guess. I mean, I don't really know how to answer that. We're one of the best offensive teams in the country. When you lead the country in on-base percentage you're going to leave more runners on base.

I feel part of the credit has to go to the pitcher at times. And I think it was Purnell did a nice job inducing the ground ball for the double play.

But, yeah, we've got our guys -- we're not going to bring in a bunch of free agents for tomorrow night. It's a 27-man roster. And I'm good with that; I'm totally good with that.

Q. I noticed the meeting with the team after the game was brief. Is this a case of you're not going to talk much about this game and immediately move on to tomorrow?

COACH JOHNSON: No, we just chose to do it in the locker room. It was a long day out there and not a great day. Wanted to get them out of the sun, get them back to the hotel.

There's a real physical grind of this thing that some of these guys are going through. And so we want to get them hydrated, rested, out of the sun and get a full day and a half to recover.

For us, playing a day game to a night game is almost the equivalent of an off day because we haven't had many of those here. And that's a good thing for our team.

Q. Jordan Thompson had those two tough errors early. Do you plan to stick with him? How do you go about coaching him through that?

COACH JOHNSON: Yeah, he'll play tomorrow. There's no question about it. He started every game for two years. He's played very good shortstop this year.

I think the simplicity of the first one is, on a double-play ball, we call it a sure man and then a quick man. The guy who fields the ball has to be sure he's going to catch it and then feed it to the second baseman and let the second baseman be the one that's quick.

I think he came up too early trying to do too much. They put pressure on us first and second, nobody out. That's just a coaching point of staying, securing the first out.

And then on the second one, it's just a case of trying to do too much. And trying to wheel and back pick. I'm not sure where he was throwing it, to be honest with you.

So you coach on those two points. And I mean I love Jordan. We wouldn't be in the College World Series without Jordan and how he's played this year. He's had a tough tournament offensively, but there's been a lot of stories in the College World Series of guys struggle, struggle, struggle and then get a big hit for you and make a big play for you. And I think he's a great candidate for that.

Q. You mentioned that you haven't yesterday decided whether or not Skenes is going to be on the bump tomorrow. Whether or not he is, how are you and your staff planning on taking care of the mistakes, like the errors and the walks, that plagued you guys defensively today?

COACH JOHNSON: Get a complete reset. I don't know what our fielding percentage in the NCAA Tournament was going into today, but I'm guessing it was pretty good.

We're not in a place where we're going to go out and hit a bunch of balls on the concrete and those type of things. We need to get these guys rested get their bodies underneath you.

For us it's playing in character. When I look at this record of -- Florida's 54-16; they do a good job and they make it hard for you. We're 53-17, and if you're 53-17 you've done a heck of a lot more right than wrong.



So we're going to stick to how we prepare and roll it out tomorrow and give it everything we have. One game for the national championship. I think Coach O'Sullivan probably feels great about his team as he should with the players they have. I feel great with my team, with the players we have.

Q. With Jordan, do you think he's just pressing too much mentally? And what do you need to do to sort of help a guy get through those sort of struggles?

COACH JOHNSON: I mean, trying to do too much is not a plan. And so we'll continue to help him with that. I feel like his at-bats last night were much better.

I think he's played good defense here, really good defense, until today. I actually don't think there's been any carry-over between offense and defense. And in his position, along with catcher, you have to play the game that way. And I'm proud of him for doing that. So we're just going to coach him and get him ready to go for tomorrow.

Q. Are uncharacteristic losses, this lopsided, easier to get over, to get through, to get past, or are they all the same?

COACH JOHNSON: It is what it is. I mean, I've had a Super Regional game relatively similar to this, and then we turn the score around on the team in game three.

It happens all the time in our league, in two-out-of-three series, which is like Super Regional College/World Series game. It's obvious.

Look at the two teams that are playing. They're the two best teams in college baseball. And I won't give it any thought.

Would I have liked it to have been different? Yeah. I think we were prepared to play at the beginning of the game. And then we asked Nate to get out there give us everything he could. He really emptied the tank four days ago. He didn't quite have it the same.

And then Gavin, let's be honest, credit Evans for getting a swing on it. But that ball would have easily been foul had the wind not shifted, but the wind shifted. And if I could fix the wind the way I wanted to, I'd probably be doing different things, a lot of different things. But really excited about tomorrow night. And I believe the players are too.

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