

# 2024 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 14, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Tennessee Volunteers

Coach Tony Vitello

Christian Moore

Dylan Dreiling

Blake Burke

Postgame Press Conference



We had a coaches meeting. And to quote Ace Ventura, "why don't you cry about it, saddle bags." You'll have to beat somebody good. So our guys toughened up pretty good there. There was no game plan other than to compete and they did a good job there.

**Q. Christian, heck of a night, second cycle ever. Last time it happened was in the '50s. What's your mindset in a situation like that in terms of what you felt? And what was that last AB like when you guys really needed it?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: Through the whole game the only mindset I have is to win, get on base for my team, set the tone. I have really good hitters behind me, so I just want to get on for them.

Really, to be honest, I didn't know I did it. I was just so hyper-focused on winning and just that next task.

And I guess talk about that last AB, just want to fight. Down to my last strike there with two outs, just want to fight. It's a battle. Me versus him, mano y mano. And I guess I won that one.

**Q. Can you guys talk about maintaining that belief throughout? And you guys were getting guys on base but wasn't getting runs across the board. Then you get to the eighth and ninth and you guys come back and win it?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: We talk about it all the time in the locker room, in the dugout. We believe in each other day in, day out. And we know that all we have to do is pass the torch to the next person.

I said it earlier, but the group out there, we've played a lot of games together. So there's that certain comfort between us and knowing my brother has my back at all costs. So when you go out there and have that, good things can happen, like tonight.

DYLAN DREILING: I thought it was pretty good what C-Mo said.

Tennessee - 12, Florida State - 11

TONY VITELLO: I guess I've had time, but I haven't taken time to think of what a good opening statement is. Obviously both teams get a lot of credit for putting on a show for the fans. My understanding is the game prior to ours was like that, too, and that's what this place is about. And it's why we get the crowds that we do here. It's why this sport has grown into what it is.

And there's a lot that could be dissected in the game. So we'll leave it up to your questions. Just the one thing that I haven't shared with the team, but I'll share with these guys is we hit BP early, and we had a lot of downtime in kind of a holding room, a makeshift locker room.

And as we were getting ready to go out in the dugout, I was looking around the room and had a sense of comfort, just because looking at the group of guys that we were about to go do battle with, felt pretty dang good about it. I think we knew we were going to do battle with a very offensive team, as you saw.

But when you come here, it's Abbott a few years ago. He might have been the quickest to the big leagues out of that group. I don't know, it's hard to argue who the best pitcher is. And the argument is a little easier with last year, it was Skenes.

And we finally figure out who we're facing today and you look at the video and you look at the numbers, and Arnold can certainly make the case that he's the best pitcher in this thing.



**Q. Blake, you had the 2-2 check swing. Can you walk us through that? And how did you readjust and get the big hit in the ninth?**

BLAKE BURKE: It was a check swing, and I didn't go. I kept battling after that. I just kept battling, kept battling and that was the result.

**Q. Christian, in your last at-bat there was a clip of you saying to the dugout, "it's fine, it's fine." What were you trying to convey to your teammates in that moment?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: I was actually saying, "let's fight." It's a battle. Like I said, two outs, two strikes. If I get out, we lose. Let's fight. That's what I did.

**Q. You were saying that even though you were at the plate?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: Yes, it's a group effort.

**Q. Last question, did you know that you had the cycle?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: No, I did not, sir.

**Q. What's the biggest mindset coming at the top of the third inning, getting six runs across from the other side? What was your mentality to get back in it? And all of you guys, too -- Chris, Dylan, Blake -- what do you feel about the offense going into Sunday and everything else that lies ahead?**

BLAKE BURKE: We're a very gritty team. And when we go out there, we always think that we can put up whatever number on the scoreboard. And we aren't trying to put a 6 spot; we're just trying to win every pitch. We threw a bunch of jabs all game, and then threw that big punch in the ninth inning.

DYLAN DREILING: With this offense we're always one inning away. That's kind of our motto this year. And we just had a belief that a big inning was coming and just trusting each other.

CHRISTIAN MOORE: I think that's kind of the staple of this program. We're always one inning away. They put up six; we can do it, too. And we have that confidence in each other. And we were able to do that, scratch and claw and was able to get back in there.

**Q. Blake and Christian, with you all coming back to win the game the way you did how much if at all does that change some of the conversation you all are going**

**to want to have about some of the way things went early in that game and the miscues and that stuff, just team wide?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: We won. I don't know if we'll have that conversation. But I know we won that game. And we're just going to try to keep every other game from there. Put that game behind us. It's cool. Walk-off, everything like that. It's now on to the next task. I don't know who we play or whatever, but we'll be ready for them.

**Q. You guys talked about how relentless this team is, just proven it season after season, and especially this'd season, throughout the season. What do you attribute to that, the brotherhood, chemistry everything around that?**

CHRISTIAN MOORE: I think from the fall, from the jump, you could tell we bonded really good. Doing everything together. Always hanging out in the locker room, later, later.

We kind of knew we had something special, and we knew all we had to do was put it on the field and work hard to be in this situation. And all those guys, even the guys in the dugout, really pushed themselves to be here and to be this team.

I'm super proud of everybody. And I'm hoping we can keep this train going.

BLAKE BURKE: I forgot the question, but we love each other and we're playing for each other, including the coaches.

CHRISTIAN MOORE: Love you, Coach V.

**Q. Tony, Cannon seems like he's been really productive as a pinch-hitter for you all year. What has made him so good in those moments? And what did you see from him in that at-bat in the ninth?**

TONY VITELLO: I think it's a little bit of a backwards answer, but I think it's what he's capable of with the nature of his position and also what we think his strengths are. It's kind of a Catch-22.

It's, we've got an opportunity to put you in the game, but hold on, we want to put you in the game when the fire's burning hot. That can be really frustrating for a young guy, even more frustrating for a guy that kind of envisions a Pete Rose/George Brett style of the attacking the game, which he truly does.

But for this team in particular it's what his role is and what it

needs to be. There's a good chance he'll catch before our time is done here. There's a great chance he has to be patient for the next situation.

But I think what you're seeing is what he's capable of. It kind of embodies what these guys are saying. I know they're trying to answer correctly -- they're really good dudes on the field. They're very competitive on the field.

But what they're talking about, brotherhood and throwing those words, Peebles has accepted his role. And I could go on and on down the list.

Snead gets the win tonight. There's times we've taken the ball from him. And there's times where he's sore but he wants to take the ball. And it's been a good group as far as all that stuff goes.

**Q. The lineup turned over and you have a runner on and Christian and Blake are coming up in a two-run game. What's that confidence level like for you? And as those counts go full, is there a tension or does confidence outweigh that for you?**

TONY VITELLO: I thought C-Mo was telling me to calm down. K.T. told me to calm down about four times. Had a bunch of dirt in my hands at one point. So I think I was the least composed out of that group.

But I assure you that I was confident. We just talked about getting on base.

It's nice to turn over the lineup. And Christian Moore was a man on a mission tonight. So you would like to see him get up to the plate.

But honestly in that situation, what the conversation is, let's just make sure we get one baserunner. And then I feel like our lineup is capable. Tonight I don't think Cal had much to show for it. And in one of those Regional or Super Regional games, Cal almost took over. And we could go each guy through the lineup and talk similar fashion.

**Q. Tony, when you came out of the dugout in the top of the ninth, none of us knew why you did. Could you explain why you came out of the dugout?**

TONY VITELLO: Just the balk call. Again, a lack of composure, but it kind of had some history to it. That was something we saw earlier in the game. And to be honest with you, if you go back, watch the video, we've got other guys in my opinion that were guilty of it on our side, too.

So my feeling was it was arbitrarily called out of the blue. I haven't talked to those guys. Typically the umpires will tell

an infielder, tell that guy -- maybe that was the case, maybe they warned him, and he still didn't come completely set. But we felt we were in a situation, especially with a runner at third, where that didn't take place, and I guess just kind of a competitive situation.

I mean, again, coming into the game with Arnold, you watched the video, you want 90 feet any way you can possibly get it. So just kind of a buildup to that situation. But it's what he did and there was kind of calls that went back and forth for both teams.

**Q. So Chris leaves the game early in the first inning. Could you talk about what you saw from your bullpen outside of that third inning, their ability to be resilient on the mound?**

TONY VITELLO: That bothers me that he came out of the game that quick. It would have been interesting to see how things would have taken place -- the first play was tricky. It's a different field, gorgeous field, but it's a different field. And I don't know that I managed our practice time as well as I needed to yesterday.

I mean, you don't get much time to get used to it and they cut it. It's not like our guys weren't focused. I promise you, we coached, but it looked like we were disoriented in some of those situations.

Stom was throwing the ball very well. As soon as I took one step out of the dugout, I'd have to look at the video, I forget what he said. Some sort of phrase. I don't think there was a cuss word in there, but he was as frustrated as I was that we had to take him out.

But then each guy after that kind of did what they had to do. Those are more works than you're typically going to see out of a Coach Anderson pitching staff. They're very dangerous in the lineup. There was some plays we could have made behind him. All in all, hot mess. It's not going to be pretty. Doesn't have to be pretty this time of year, just gotta keep fighting.

**Q. You talked about your first two teams that came to Omaha. Maybe those first two games not playing like themselves, did you see that early on from this bunch and what allowed this bunch to maybe overcome some early mistakes and pull out this type of win?**

TONY VITELLO: No, I felt like pregame, we try not to rush anything. Probably the better way to do it -- I've been guilty of doing that in the past. Like I said, we had some bonus time.

And then you could sense the air about him was pretty



good. They were eager to go. Stom was throwing the ball well. Our first inning against Arnold, I've got to be honest, I didn't envision it that way.

One thing I did envision, to be a thousand percent honest with you, too, we had a fair amount of success this year. We haven't had a walk-off win.

For whatever reason, that was in my head. Maybe because of the game beforehand. Those things are interesting. Because once you do something, it kind of seems to occur again or come in bunches.

But I think a couple of terrific plays and our guys weren't handling some of the circumstances that were present on the field. And what I said in the mid-game interview was, I don't mean because we're in Omaha or because the stakes are high, but the actual circumstances that were present on the field needed to be handled better by our guys.

Sometimes, when you compete, you can cover up mistakes, and I think that's what the definition of that is tonight. It was certainly a great example.

**Q. Coach, monster night for C-Mo. Could you tell me a little bit more generally, though, about what you've seen from him as a player from a development standpoint since he's been around in Knoxville?**

TONY VITELLO: Wants to win as bad as anyone I've ever been around. And the umpires, we talked about that, there, Grady, the home plate umpire was really good to me because he let me come out, speak my mind, kind of talk about some things. He let me know what was going on on the field.

And the one guy we were talking about back and forth was C-Mo. And I was pleading a particular case, that guy wants to win as anybody on the field. I don't know how you define that, but that's what makes his motor go. He's not going so good when he's not in that mode and he's worrying about other things.

To answer your question, his development has come he's matured a lot on and off the field where he gets into that spot more often and doesn't let a bump in the road set him off or a poor game set him off in another direction. And it's been nice to see that development.

Blake Burke and he are two guys -- Chris Burke was talking about it before the game, fun story: Two different sides of the country, two totally different ways to do it, but they've both matured in so many different ways. And they're pros, they're ready to be pros. I just hope it's not for

a while.

**Q. Curious about C-Mo, like, what we saw tonight was incredibly special. In some ways the culmination of a lot of time and work that's gone on with his development. For you, what was the moment that you realized that he was special? When you look back at recruiting the kid, was there a moment that stands out in your mind where you said I know that kid can be different?**

TONY VITELLO: Our staff did a good job recruiting him. I played a very small part. As a matter of fact, I went to one game in the middle of nowhere in Georgia, and he didn't say hi to me. I don't know if he knew it was me or not. I tease him about that all the time.

He was pitching in that game. He was a pitcher, an athletic infielder that we recruited, and I mentioned earlier to ESPN folks, we didn't think he was coming to school.

He had to turn down really good money in order to come. I was going to save this for later, but I think he's kind of battling a little bit of the reputation that people throw around right now from others that we dealt with three years ago. We had some concepts there that not a guy that says no to good money and wants to play team ball and things like that.

We knew right away, once he was on campus, we were wrong. But we also had to do some things to, again, like any freshman needed to mature, and he's gotten to that point right now. So it's fun to watch.

**Q. Did you ever see (indiscernible) the one he hit today?**

TONY VITELLO: To be honest with you, a couple similar at our park. But I would say the more unique thing was the reaction from some of the guys in the dugout.

When you impress your teammates that way where it's like a Shawn Kemp, for people old enough in the room, like a Shawn Kemp dunk and you've got everybody on the bench going crazy, that was kind of their reaction in the dugout.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports