

# 2024 Men's College World Series

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**North Carolina Tar Heels**

**Coach Scott Forbes**

**Vance Honeycutt**

**Casey Cook**

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State - 9, North Carolina - 5

**SCOTT FORBES:** Florida State has got a really good team. At the end of the day, they played better than we did. Today, you have to tip your cap to them. A really, really good lineup. Two top, probably, 15 picks.

But we battled. We battled all year. Didn't surprise me we made a run back there. Just didn't get it done.

It's not easy to talk this time when the season ends. I've been out here. At the end of the day there's only one team that's happy when the dust settles out here in Omaha. But I told the guys in the locker room, the word that came to my mind was "proud," just because they should be proud of what they've done this entire season.

They've worked since August. They stayed together. They pulled hard for one another. They gave our fans so much to be passionate about, so much to look forward to.

Our fans were awesome. I'm just proud of Carolina baseball, where it is, but that's a credit to our players in that locker room this year and all the support this program has.

I'm proud to be the leader of the program. But, man, these guys, just so thankful that they took me along this ride with them.

**Q. Down six runs you showed a lot of heart. Can you talk about that, starting with your home run in that big inning?**

**VANCE HONEYCUTT:** That's how this team has been all year. They're just no-quit. That's a credit to how we're trained, how we're coached and the character of the guys

in the locker room.

**Q. Vance, this team had a ton of memorable moments along the way. What's one that really stood out to you this year?**

**VANCE HONEYCUTT:** It's hard to put your finger on just one. Probably a Sunday win at Miami or UVA or State, or coming back from losing the first game at Duke, winning the series. Just things like that that kind of really defines this team, I guess. Kind of when everyone is counting us out, just being able to battle and play for each other.

**Q. Casey, how would you sum up this ride that you guys have been on this season to get to this point? And also the end there, you guys kind of stayed around the dugout for a while, and I guess kind of were taking it in a little bit. What was that like, the season and the ending?**

**CASEY COOK:** It was an unbelievable season. You guys saw it. We had one of the best teams in the country. And our end goal was to win this whole thing, but I mean we came down here, and I think the postseason sums it up. We didn't hit like we necessarily wanted to. We knew we were capable of doing more, but we found a way. We found a way, we found a way.

And we didn't get it done, but I mean I think that just shows what kind of team we had this year. We were a close-knit team and everyone was pulling for each other and good things happened.

But at the end of the day we didn't get what we wanted. I have zero regrets and I know this team has zero regrets because we wanted it. We all did. Nothing to hang your head on because we gave it all we had and did everything in our power to win. And it just didn't work out.

**Q. Vance, Casey, what did this experience mean to you playing with these guys on this stage in what might be some of your last college games?**

**VANCE HONEYCUTT:** You know, we said day one, the goal was to win a national championship. It starts with



getting out here in Omaha. You don't want it to end, but if it does, you want it to be out here. We're very fortunate to have had that.

These experiences with these guys and this team, you won't forget it. Just to be able to continue playing, which you just continue to play the sport you love with the guys you that want to be around every day and you have been. It's just special to be able to be out here and share these moments with these guys.

CASEY COOK: It's like what Vance said, we came into school together. We've been playing with each other for three years. It's what it's all about. These are my best friends. If I wanted the season to end anywhere I'd want it to be in Omaha. And doing it with your best friends is even more special. So like I said earlier, we didn't get what we wanted, but I'm happy it can be here with the guys I kind of grew up playing with.

**Q. You were mentioning there, you've been playing beside Vance for several years now. What's it like seeing him play on a day-to-day basis and some of the special things that he's done across the course of his career?**

CASEY COOK: You guys see it. He's a great leader. He plays hard. He plays to win. You never hear him talk about himself because he's not concerned about that. He's concerned about winning, and it's contagious.

And playing outfield next to him makes my job easy. I don't really have to -- I didn't have to cover much ground. So that was nice.

But more so for the team. It's contagious. It spreads. He's a winner. He wants to win. And he's a big reason why we're here. So it was a pleasure for me. It was a pleasure for the whole team.

**Q. How tough was that top of the ninth inning to swallow? You narrowed it to a two-run game, and it seemed like the wind shifted and they got a couple of balls up in the jet stream there?**

SCOTT FORBES: The first one I thought he got up in that jet stream. And then the next one, the guy hit a mistake. That's what good hitters do. I thought that would have been out anywhere. Obviously we felt like we were in striking distance.

But this team, still, they came in talking about getting the tying run to the plate.

That word "belief" is extremely important and having faith.

There was no doubt in my mind we get the tying run something crazy was going to happen. Unfortunately, it just didn't.

**Q. Obviously Dalton had an amazing run, 14 and a third shutout innings, what was it today? Just baseball, didn't have his best stuff?**

SCOTT FORBES: I felt like he couldn't get that cutter where he wanted to throw it. But, man, like, golly, talk about a kid we wouldn't be here without him, and he's just human.

And you have to give Florida State some credit, too. I really thought, no offense to any of the teams we played all year, I thought top to bottom that was the most balanced offense, left, right, right, left, speed, power. They made Dalton pay for some mistakes. But he sure was getting after it and they just got some hits.

**Q. With this just being one of your most successful seasons as head coach, ACC regular season championship, making it to the College World Series, what has this year meant to you, and what has it meant to do it with this team?**

SCOTT FORBES: I mean, to be bluntly honest with you, I changed the lens through how I coached a couple years ago, and I give all that credit to having faith in Jesus Christ. And it's all about relationships for me.

So it's not about me. It's not about me getting the team to Omaha, it's about the team getting to Omaha, and the program and the former players. That's what I'm most disappointed in, that I don't get to put the uniform on again with my team, and I don't get to see the former players that are out here.

And the longer you do it, you just realize those relationships and that brings you pure joy. It's hard when you lose like that. But we talk about it all the time: To win a national championship, where is your joy coming from?

I think these guys know where that comes from. It comes from creating those memories and having those relationships that you're never going to lose.

So it means a lot for our program more. The program's way bigger than me. The university's bigger than me and the players are much, much -- they're the ones who make the program.

So, for me, I'm just so happy that they got to experience Omaha. And we got a lot of young guys that I'm hoping can help all these other guys that come back to UNC and

come in, that they can also experience Omaha.

**Q. You've been here before, obviously, as an assistant a couple times, and just the road you guys took this year, there was so much drama. It was so bizarre. What was different about this team -- you've probably touched on it a little bit -- but what was different about this team that made them overcome the LIU game, the LSU game and the Super Regional and all that?**

SCOTT FORBES: If I had to put my finger on one thing, it would be just selfless. Just guys really pull for one another. And that can be hard sometimes because everybody wants to play at this level and everybody's talented.

You look at the lineup card and your name's not in it, how are you going to react? But it's powerful, we talk about how corny the word "love" is, but I tell the guys all the time, that needs to be the backbone of everything we do here. If you really care about each other and you really love one another, you're going to be competitive and you want to be in the lineup. But I think these guys wanted it so bad for each other, and that is such a powerful thing.

And all of our teams, that was something that a lot of our teams have had that made it out here is that camaraderie. It's never perfect. But that would be what I would say that a selfless group; they had one mission. They believed in us as coaches when we talked to them about like, hey, the most important thing is everybody's on the same mission and everybody's pulling in the same direction. If you do that, you have a chance to have a special season, and they decided to do that and we had a special season.

**Q. Every coach probably has had to do the thing you did after that game where you walk down the dugout afterwards, you're shaking hands with everybody, including some people who just played their last game for you. How hard for you personally are those moments?**

SCOTT FORBES: They're difficult, for sure. But if you really step back and think about it, they're difficult because you care so much about them and they care so much about each other. But it's hard because you just personally -- I just care about the guys. I hate to see them hurting. I've been in their shoes.

It was only a Division III World Series, but to me that was a big deal. And we lost out there and I've seen the locker room with the other guys to see their hurt.

But there's also so much joy, that word, just being with the guys and we talked about how, hey, they said it. If you're

going to have to shed some tears, you would rather share them in Omaha than share them somewhere else. We're thankful we got out here.

**Q. How would you describe what you've seen from Vance Honeycutt the last couple of years and also the way he showed up out here in Omaha?**

SCOTT FORBES: From just his ability, I always use the word "electric." That's just what he is, he's electric. And he is the definition of a leader. He has integrity. He works. He puts winning first. He's also just a kid and he plays like that and he plays free and easy. And, man, I'm just going to miss -- I'm going to miss not just watching him play but I'm going to miss seeing him every single day. But, man, he's something else, isn't he? He was one of the best I've ever coached.

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