

# 2024 Men's College World Series

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Florida State Seminoles**

**Coach Link Jarrett**

**James Tibbs III**

**Joe Charles**

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee - 7, Florida State - 2

LINK JARRETT: That's a good team in the other dugout, clearly. Well-constructed, variety of arms, physical offensively, dynamic, athletic. They made some exceptional plays. You could basically go around the diamond and make note of the exceptional plays they made.

I don't think the score was -- it wasn't reflective of some of the quality of the at-bats with really nothing to show for it. And we may have swung the bat today as well in areas as we did in the tournament with little to show. And that's part of it. That's why it's difficult to, in some cases, to get here and win games on this stage when the other team can pitch and has the athleticism to make so many of those above-average plays.

We did not get out of the gate well against them. We found ourselves in a little bit of a hole. Oxford settled things down. I think Joe pitched great. One of the longest outings of his season and career and was on it. The slider was good, the fastball velocity stayed there.

The two home runs clearly were a little jolt, but it wasn't enough. And that's unfortunate.

This was the most dynamic team I've coached. The personality, the dynamic nature of the personalities on this team made it something that I think was fun for people to watch, the way they played the game. Played at it. They played the game hard and with personality. And I think that made it enjoyable. Made it enjoyable for myself watching these guys do their thing.

Programmatically, start of this year and winning, whatever

it was, 19 or 20 games in a row, was clearly out of the starting blocks as good as I've ever seen. And surviving Leiter and Whitaker down, two of our other pitchers never made it to the mound. This had a really special look to it. Everybody is going to absorb some blows on the mound. If we can get to the bottom of some of the arm issues we face in this sport, that would be a great day. I don't know what it is, but we all face it and you try to absorb it and move forward, which is exactly what these guys did.

ACC player of the year. I haven't coached a better hitter, I haven't coached a better person in all walks of life. And some of these guys don't realize it, but as they help the program, they help themselves in quite a way in terms of their baseball futures. And you guys probably know that better than I do.

It's not easy to get here. That walk in here is great. That walk out is very difficult. Very difficult.

And had a few of those balls landed differently or couple feet one way or another direction, I think this is a much tighter game. I'm not saying we deserved to win the game, but it was close to being far different than it felt today.

And their senior lefty, (indiscernible) senior and a grad, those guys pitch and they navigate. They pitch. They pitch. And they did a good job.

And their defense. I know neither team played really clean, but I think the athleticism on display on both sides was exceptional.

And I told you on the outset, the college game has never been played better than it is right now and you saw that. You've seen it. And that's a fact.

**Q. James, since you've been here for three years how have you seen the program grow since the time you got here and since the time Link has taken over the program?**

JAMES TIBBS III: I think, first off, oftentimes we see people give glory to God in the good times, but I'm going to give glory to God in the tough times, too.



He's blessed me with the opportunity to be at the best university in the country. And he's blessed me with a great -- the opportunity to play with a bunch of great guys and a great coach, one I believe in and one that I believe that will get it done.

In three years, this program has seen quite the turn. It's been hard. It's been fun and it's been everything in between.

I'll never be able to thank Coach, the coaching staff and all the people that have made this possible enough for believing in me and for allowing me to be a part of it.

The verse I've been preaching all year is Proverbs 16:9. And it says, "A man plans his path, but the Lord establishes his steps."

This isn't quite how I thought it would go. But I'm so blessed to be a part of this team and this year.

**Q. There were ton of memorable moments along the way for this team. What are some that stand out for you two?**

JOE CHARLES: I would say every single day I got to spend with these guys in this program -- the coaches, the staff, everyone -- really made every single day a special day. And that's why we had so much success on the field because we approached every day day by day. And just every single day, I guess.

JAMES TIBBS III: I think you spend enough time with a group of people, either you love them or hate them. It's easy. I've never loved a group of guys as much as I have had this year. And to be able to go through every day -- the bus trips and the tornados and the sweeps or whatever it may be -- watching this group grow and come together, it was like nothing I've ever seen. And so that's what I'll take away from this year for sure.

**Q. Not a lot of guys sort of navigate through that Tennessee lineup with four or five innings and give up just one run. What did you see from the scouting report and what were you able to execute that made you able to do that?**

JOE CHARLES: Coach Posey is the best pitching coach I've ever had the pleasure to work with. And I have a lot of trust in him and he trusts me. He just radios in those pitches and I try to execute them as well as I can.

So the credit's gotta go to the coaches that are doing all the scouting and kind of putting me in the best position to

have success and make my job easy where I've just got to go make those good pitches.

**Q. Joe, your journey to get to where you are now, obviously not the ending you wanted, but the season you got to be a part of and getting to pitch on that stage today?**

JOE CHARLES: I'm just so thankful for Florida State University and everybody involved that -- I'm such a different person from my first day on campus, just so much for the better. And I couldn't be more thankful for the coaches, the staff, my teammates.

Getting to play in Omaha was something that was really cool and getting to compete with these guys. Just every day the motivation is just fighting for another day to play with these guys.

And I think that's what made it all so special, was getting to do it with these guys.

**Q. Wondering what you said to your team after the game in that meeting?**

LINK JARRETT: I told them they were the most dynamic group I've coached. That goes personality, heart, the way they played, the style, the physicality of that group. It was just fun. They made every day fun.

And it becomes more fun when you can stack the quality of play that we saw them stack throughout the beginning part of the season, the middle part of the season and the postseason. It was remarkable.

And there's 26 new guys on the team. There were times in coaching I didn't have 26 players on the team overall. That was 26 new people involved in this. And their willingness to buy into what was going on is tricky. You feel like in this day and age, in some respects, with the ability to have that much movement, it's hard to get your system into that locker room and onto that field and actually feel like you can function in this sort of game.

So for those individuals to jump in here and acclimate and come together -- and you know how much these guys love each other you can feel it and you can watch them play. They play for passion with each other and the game.

That's what I told them. And I told them walking in here is amazing and walking out is extremely difficult. And it's hard for me too. And I understand that. We just stood there and took it in a little bit. It was emotional.

And it is so hard to get here. It's hard. It's very hard. And



the challenge of getting here is equalled by how difficult it is to walk off that field.

**Q. You obviously saw Tennessee's team in '22 near this time of year. And now to see them two years later, what do you feel like the difference is, if anything, that's allowing them to be successful right now?**

LINK JARRETT: I think the profile of their pitching staff was a lot different in '22. They had starters that they kind of ran at you and then pieced it together at the end with some of the guys. I think some of the guys were involved in that.

It seems like they can piece it together for an entire game if they need to, and don't lean on specific pitchers on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday to try to get you six or seven innings.

The ability to onboard enough quality players to have the opportunity to extend through your bullpen if you needed to and, quite frankly, they basically did it on Friday. Sechrist pitched great today, but I think they were ready, if need be, to go get him.

Of all the things that stand out the construction of the pitching staff probably is the biggest difference that I noticed. Good arms. Just a variety of different arms were in that setting. I can't remember exactly who it was, Dollander and you may know the other guys, there was more established -- you're getting these three guys and then the bullpen.

Here it was just the barrage of different looks -- lefties, righties, deception in delivery. Really good use of the secondary pitches. It wasn't necessarily the pure velocity and the wipeout stuff that, at times in '22, you probably sensed. But well constructed.

And you can't map it out to know that this is how you want to do it every year. It may not, from a health perspective or personnel perspective, the draft, the things that you have to deal with to actually get to the season and endure the season, I think that's the biggest difference is just the construction and use of the pitching staff.

And Frank and Tony they do a good job. Frank has been doing this a long time. And he navigates and calls a good game. And Tony has a good handle on that program. They're in good position.

**Q. Your job as a baseball coach how difficult is it to do things you can't control balls, like balls getting laced and getting caught. I'm sure there's things you can control, but at the end of the day it's baseball.**

LINK JARRETT: That's how hard it is to get here. You have to have so many things go correctly in these short-spurt postseason events that we have in play in college baseball. It's one lineout in a Regional or Super Regional or something quirky that happens and you're not even here.

So it is part of, I guess, the beauty of the sport is sometimes the intent in how you perform in that moment when you're hitting or pitching may not always get you the result because there are variables that are not controllable. And where you hit line drives and how hard you hit them, that's part of the beauty of the game. And I think it's what makes it so unique.

Now, clearly, I mean, they're positioning their players and know what they're doing. There's still a variable in it that's very difficult to control.

To watch Marco and some of the guys up and down the lineup that just absolutely -- from an exit-velocity standpoint -- probably could do no more with not much to show.

It's the beauty of the game. It also is what makes it very difficult when you go through that. And I feel like at times you're doing exactly what you set out to do and the result doesn't match.

**Q. You felt this before as a player at Florida State obviously as a coach, too, but with those different perspectives, how does it hit in your shoes now as the head coach at Florida State? But obviously also how do you help your team deal with what just happened and help the program use this?**

LINK JARRETT: Well, I told the assistant coaches the other day, when we were off, I said, write down everything you feel in every one of these games, every detail you think matters and what type of player have you to recruit to get here consistently and then win here.

When you're here all of a sudden it's a different game. To get here, the depth on the mound is so critical. Once you're here, it's how dynamic are a handful of those arms.

So it changes. So you have to build it for both. You have to have enough depth but then you also have to make sure you have some really capable, dynamic pieces to wipe out some of the stuff that happens in these games. And the strikeouts is a huge part of that.

It's very difficult to leave here. I've had to deal with this a lot. I'm also very fortunate to have been here as a coach a couple times and with two programs and as a player. You

try to learn every time. And the health is part of it.

I'm sure if you ask any of the coaches they had some really tough injury losses. How do you overcome that? I think about the fall all the time. What do you do with some of these arms in the fall?

When you look at what we have coming back, what we have coming in, it's got a chance to be really special on the mound. How do you handle that? So you're reflecting on how you get your work, how you keep them healthy, when do you push them, when do you back off, how do you manage your preseason, how do you structure who pitches in the middle of the week and your relief stuff. It's a complicated thought process for me to build it correctly.

So, as I've gone through it as a player, it was always what can I do better to make sure, when my number's called at the plate, in the field, helping lead a team that I can get it done. And then as a coach, you have a very similar feeling to walk out of there. It's eerily similar.

But you're looking at different issues to try to solve so that you can get it right. And the transfer stuff, we sat in our hotel rooms as a coaching staff and tried to navigate the guys in the portal, the 4500 players in the portal, to try to get it right.

And it's more clear when you're in this moment here playing in it, can that guy help you? Is that guy what we need? So you're trying to solve it as a coach in how you build and how you teach and how you manage the team and strategize it and call pitches and run an offense, it's different than what you were doing as a player, clearly, but the feeling of it is equally as difficult in both respects.

**Q. What went into the decision to start John, and how tough of a decision is it with Jamie on only four days' rest, was that an option for you at all or was it just --**

LINK JARRETT: We talked to him. He was not ready to go. He wasn't really ready to go. And John, you've seen it. When the breaking ball is working, he's pitched in an extended role against some really, really good teams. And you expect -- this is clearly new for him to be in this setting. You expect them still as competitors to go give you their A stuff.

Now, we didn't get off the bag real well on Burkes' ball. Cantu, we looked flat-footed. We didn't get handle the ground ball at third to turn the double play. So there were some self-inflicting moments that really didn't give us much of a chance to make us feel like we could try to help him work through it.

He's a really good young arm that's going to impact us for a long time. So the positive of what clearly didn't go well was he's felt it and tasted it and been on the stage. I think that goes a long way.

Could you start Oxford? We didn't want to start Whit. We've asked a lot of him. We were trying to pick a moment where maybe he could help us in a short spurt. We thought Johnny could extend. He's been extended. And maybe he could give us 45, 50, 60 pitches. We didn't support him enough out of the gates.

**Q. From a year ago, 23 wins to, now, 49, going now into this offseason, how do things change to go from being here to to try to be here, or is it just the approach of finding the right guys, the right fits, things like that?**

LINK JARRETT: When you can acquire some experienced freshmen, that helps. And I think the guys going into their sophomore year that have played and have felt it. So you get a little time, when you onboard a grad student or somebody that has one year, you know the turnover is coming. So I like what we've done.

Now, we need Leiter to be healthy. We need Jamie Arnold to be healthy. And we have some good young arms coming in, some JUCO arms we've gotten three transfer arms out of portal. There's other pieces we need to add when you look at the puzzle and where we need to fit those athletes.

So how I felt a year ago, when I looked at what we needed to try to grab and how I feel now, now you're grabbing what you think gets you the trophy here. Last year you're trying to build a roster, competitive roster, that's more athletic, that had some depth and had some left-handed bats and had some better arm options.

Now -- that's what I told the coaches -- think about everything that you feel you need right now. Some of it may be out there and available.

When you were able to grab some younger players, you know now as opposed to last year, there's some guys that walked back in knowing exactly what's going on in the program and what it's like to run through an ACC tournament and do well and the Regional and do really well and Super Regional and do well and compete here.

Totally different feel, but my mindset has not changed. It is what can we do to figure out a way to win this, including trying to keep the guys healthy on the mound.

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