

2024 Men's College World Series

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Texas A&M Aggies

Jim Schlossnagle

Justin Lamkin

Caden Sorrell

Josh Stewart

Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M - 6, Florida - 0

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Great ball game. I thought we played really, really well. Lamkin was obviously outstanding. The decision was just trying to figure out how long to leave him in there, you know, win the game but still give us a chance over the weekend since we're down a pitcher.

Stewie made big pitches to get us out of a jam. Cortez will be better next time, I have no doubt, and obviously Grahovac had some big hits, and I thought Sorrell's homer really played a huge part of the game just to give us a little bit of a length there on the lead.

So, excited to get some rest and excited to get to play for a national title.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions for the players.

Q. Justin, pitched against Florida in the first game, now in the second game, eight innings of scoreless baseball. What do you credit the success you've had here this week and what has it been like for you to shine on this stage?

JUSTIN LAMKIN: I think the big part of it is just having self-confidence in myself and knowing I can go out there and I can compete and play at this level, and I think just



getting ahead of hitters and just having true confidence in all my pitches really helped me out.

Q. The job's not done yet, but you're about to be part of a first Texas A&M team to make the College World Series finals. What does that mean to you?

JOSH STEWART: I would say it means a lot to me. I grew up a big A&M fan, so it's awesome to be a part of the team that is able to be the first team that's made the finals. It's really cool to be a part of.

JUSTIN LAMKIN: It's really truly exciting being that team, and I'm just so proud of this group of guys and how selfless we've been playing these last few weeks. So really proud of everybody.

CADEN SORRELL: It's definitely an amazing feeling. I remember coming to these games when I was 10 years old and always wanting to be a part of this. So finally being here and making it this far, it's an amazing feeling, but obviously the job's not finished yet.

Q. It's pretty rare to see two teams play each other five times in just one singular season. So just from the Florida that you saw in your regular season series to the Florida that you faced off here, what would you say was different and what did you do to execute on your game plan accordingly to keep the Gators at bay?

JOSH STEWART: I just thought it was a good team all five games that we played 'em. I don't think the way we went about it was any different, especially from a pitching standpoint. We just fill up the strike zone and do what we do and thankfully it worked out today.

JUSTIN LAMKIN: Yeah, like he was saying, they're a really great ball club all five times we played 'em and nothing really changed. We just went out there and did our thing and filled up the zone.

CADEN SORRELL: Yeah, what he said. (Laughing.)

Q. Josh, you had a little bit of a break there between the SEC tournament and the College World Series.



What was that like, just kind of being ready, and then what do you feel like you've been able to show in these last two games, especially today?

JOSH STEWART: I would say it wasn't too big of a deal with the break. Got work in the off days or whatnot and didn't try to rise to the occasion or whatever, just sunk back to what we do every single day and just go one day at a time, really. I didn't try to make it bigger than it is.

Q. Walk us through that at-bat where you hit the homer?

CADEN SORRELL: I think I started the at-bat 2-0 against him, just because they brought him in after the other pitcher started throwing a couple balls, and pretty much my approach was just sitting fastball. I know he's pretty fastball-heavy. He's got a lot of arm side running right on it, so I was just sitting fastball, trying to get something that started low or middle, and luckily, he threw a fastball pretty much middle middle and I was just sitting fastball and I got it and I executed it.

Q. In the top of first inning, you guys had four walks to draw on to your at-bat with the sacrifice fly. What is it like to get runs, not even just the big hit, but just working key counts at the right time?

CADEN SORRELL: Yeah, I mean, it's just about putting up the best ABs you can. I think that was a new pitcher. I was the first batter that he faced. So I was just trying to put up a good AB, drive a run in any way that I could, and luckily I was able to.

Q. You guys are going to go this whole College World Series only playing SEC teams. Is that something that kind of crossed your minds or I guess what are your thoughts on that? Is that something that you like, don't like, playing only teams in your conference?

CADEN SORRELL: I mean, yeah, I don't really know how to answer that one too well. But I'm not too surprised that we're facing all SEC teams. We had two SEC teams on our side, three including us. So it doesn't surprise me too much.

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Keeps our non-conference record in tack. Seriously.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you. We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. When you step back and look at what this team has been able to do in the face of all of this injury stuff, adversity, it keeps feeling like it doesn't matter. You

guys keep putting up these kind of topflight performances. How? How do you think that's been able to happen and what has been your message to the team to get them to do this?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, I think -- yeah, we're down, what, our No. 2 starter, a first round pick, and Jace is really banged up, Appel is banged up, Schott's playing with a torn meniscus. I think from a team standpoint you just try to -- you just rally around it. That's all you can do. There's nothing -- you can't control it, so you out team the other team. That sounds coachy, but that's the way we talk about it.

But from a baseball standpoint, we throw strikes. I mean, the biggest difference between our team last year and our team this year -- I mean, obviously we are super talented team, but we throw a lot of strikes, and we make the other team throw strikes. When the other team throws strikes against us, then, you know, they have a better chance to win.

But today, they walked five, but we still -- I think we lead the nation in walks, maybe. I know it's a school record for walks. But anyway, I just think pitch and play defense. We give ourselves a chance, and then you get a timely hit here and there, have a good at-bat, and that's really just -- we've played really good baseball. So you got to give all the credit to the players, and Max has just made a huge difference in our program. That's plain and obvious to see.

Q. I know Josh wasn't really needed in the first three rounds because of the way your other guys threw. How did you like how he kind of took in that rest and what's been the key to -- or what's he done that he's been one of your go-to guys for the last couple games?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, he's been great for us all year, probably a guy that I should lean on -- lean into more. Max has done an awesome job with him, number one just giving him confidence. He's really given him a repertoire that he could use and have confidence in, and that's been the difference for Stewie. He hasn't always been the most confident guy leading into this season, and we just have a totally different atmosphere and positive environment in the bullpen that allows guys to believe in themselves. Max is to be credited for that.

Q. You talked earlier about guys -- in order to be championship team guys are going to need to step up and you just talked about Josh. Gavin Grahovac has a multi-hit game. What did you think of his performance?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: I thought it was awesome. Yeah, Gavin's -- he's still a young player and he still has things to get better at and he works hard and they call it a batting average for a reason. So if he has a bad game, I just expect him to have a good game. There ain't know AAA, man. There's nobody to bring up. He's our third baseman. He did great. He works hard and it means a lot to him. Mike Earley did an awesome job with him leading into today. Mike Earley did an incredible job of preparing us. Neely's really good and he has a very unique delivery, and Mike has been working with our guys on a different approach for two days and it paid off with Sorrell and it paid off with Camarillo, I think, right?

So the guys who committed to that, who committed to what Mike was asking 'em to do saw really good results. And I thought Teddy Burton had awesome at-bats the whole game, too.

Q. Similar question. Not to focus on the championship, but what does reaching this milestone mean to you, to your career, both as a whole and specifically your time at Texas A&M?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, I mean, I'm a college baseball fan too. I'm tired of leaving before the championship. So personally it's awesome, it's fun to get to be a part of, excited to play an awesome Tennessee team, one of the best college teams that I've -- I mean, they really have a great team. Not just great players, but they have a great team.

I want to make sure -- Florida, what Sully did with his club, coming from 13-17 to playing in the Final Four in the country, just -- Florida is the program that at Texas A&M we're trying to emulate. State school that continues just to build really good high school players on top of high school players and cherry pick the portal and not have to rely on the transfer portal so much. Florida, to me, is the epitome of what every program should look to be. It doesn't shock me. Death, taxes, and Florida in Omaha is pretty much things you can count on.

But, yeah, we're excited. I'm excited for the 12th man. Texas A&M has an awesome fan base, and just incredibly proud and awesome people that you just -- you want to reward the commitment that they have made. I think we've done that. Obviously, we'd like to win the whole thing, but it's been a good year to this point.

Q. You mentioned what it means to you personally, but what does it mean for this specific group to be the first Texas A&M team to play for a national title in program history?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's great. I think for the guys like Targac and Brad Rudis and Prager and guys that were a part of our very first team and our recruiting class with Grahovac and LaViolette, guys that were committed to other schools, Jace committed to LSU, and guys that -- they had a lot of options, and they believed in a vision that we were trying to get things flipped around at Texas A&M.

Coach Childress is to be credited for this too. We're building on his program and Mark Johnson as well. So just trying to reestablish Texas A&M as a baseball power that it should be. It should be. We have a lot of advantages, we need a new ballpark, but we also have a lot of advantages and Texas A&M should be good in baseball.

Q. How difficult was it for Jace to play tonight and how much do you think it will help having the next couple days off for him?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, huge. It was probably more difficult -- I didn't go out there, he came to me they came to me and said he feels awesome hitting and we just waited to see, have him run around the outfield before we made a decision on who played where. I didn't even watch it. All I know is the trainer came and said he's doing fine. And then that ball that got hit out there, I can't quite tell if he was a little hesitant to try and go catch it or if he couldn't. So we obviously got some work to do. And we made the change there in the last inning to try and help our defense out just a little bit and save, maybe save him. But, yeah, the next two days are going to be great and our medical staff has just done an awesome job just to get him functional out there.

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