

2024 Men's College World Series

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Florida Gators

Kevin O'Sullivan

Jac Caglianone

Tyler Shelnut

Postgame Press Conference



the way and played with, it's something that I won't ever take for granted. I appreciate Sully for taking a chance on me in high school and getting to this point. So, yeah.

Q. You both were on this team -- are on the team last year. Now is this a little more tough to get over, just because of how far you guys came with the struggles in the regular season?

TYLER SHELNUT: Yeah, I think it's very similar. I think a lot of the resilience we showed throughout the year plays into this game and how far we were able to come, simply because we're a resilient group. And like I said last year, it's heartbreaking, any time you lose a game to end the year, especially in Omaha, it's going to be heartbreaking and I'm just super proud of my teammates and the rest of this group who pushed through a lot to get here, I mean, a lot. This whole year was pretty hard on all of us. So being here was a huge accomplishment.

Q. A lot of people have marvelled at what Jac can go do on the field physically, all the home runs, but how do you describe him as a leader and teammate throughout this year and what you guys were able to do this postseason?

TYLER SHELNUT: The difference I've seen in him from the day I met him to now has been tremendous. He's grown as an individual and as a player beyond comprehension. He's a terrific kid and he's a great teammate. I think he truly does play for this team and he truly does want to win. I can't say enough about Jac, obviously, and what he's been able to accomplish.

Q. You've had a very unique career at Florida, you've endured your fair shares of highs and lows, obstacles that you had to overcome to just wear the orange and blue in the first place. So how did it feel taking the field one last time for the Gators in Omaha this past week?

TYLER SHELNUT: Well, the biggest thing I can say is that God has blessed me beyond my wildest dreams. I grew up being Gator fan my whole life, watching the Gators in Omaha. And being able to put on orange and blue every

Texas A&M - 6, Florida - 0

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: First of all, congratulations to Texas A&M and Tennessee for moving on to the final three games here -- for the final series there.

But we had a terrific year. There's been a lot of ups and downs. Our players persevered through a lot of different tough moments. Awfully proud of our team. But this time of year it's difficult. It's really hard to put into words. It's like you're going full speed in a sprint and all of a sudden it just comes to an end just like that.

So I know a lot of our guys are extremely disappointed, but speaking from my heart, I'm just awfully proud of them, for what they were able to accomplish this year and have this experience out here in Omaha.

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

Q. I don't even know where to start. Records broken, historic years back-to-back leading the Gators back to Omaha when most people were counting them out. The accolades speak for themselves here, but just in your own words, how would you describe how you want to be remembered as a Gator great?

JAC CAGLIANONE: Really just as somebody who gave it their all. Day-in and day-out I just wanted to fight for these guys next to me. Yeah, to be honest with you, I can't thank the coaches here enough for all they have done to help me get to where I am today. The people that I've met along



day and to do it in Omaha and play for a World Series is something I'm going to remember and tell my kids about for the rest of my life. It's been truly special and I can't be thankful enough for Sully and the rest of the coaching staff who brought me here. It's truly been, it's been great.

Q. Similar question for Jac, what is your biggest takeaway from the experiences that you've had the last couple of years here in Omaha, what will you remember most from the time on college baseball's biggest stage?

JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, I mean, there's really not a moment that I'll take for granted. I can't really pinpoint a specific one. Just like Tyler said, being able to wear this jersey for the past three years has been something that I'm going to take, you know, I mean, I'm never going to take it for granted. All these guys who have worn it before us, all we try to do is just make them proud, and we really appreciate what Florida is about. Just everything that Florida is, Gator Nation and all the support that they have shown us throughout this postseason has been remarkable. But, yeah, a specific moment, there isn't one, the whole thing, really.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll excuse the student-athletes and take questions for Coach.

Q. Texas A&M has obviously pitched really well this whole tournament. Even against Kentucky on Monday night. Curious your thoughts on the approach on Lamkin and you just what made them so tough again tonight?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Well, he's got some ride to his fastball. It's a different fastball from coming from the left side. He's got a really good feel for his slider, his change, he's a complete three-pitch pitcher. He throws strikes. Tonight was a little bit of a difficult night to hit because of the wind was blowing really, really strong from the left field pole to the right field pole. Anything hit in the air to left was not going to get out.

And we had our opportunities, quite honestly. We had, what, bases loaded one out and struck out. And then second and third one out and didn't drive in a run. And then we had first and second with nobody out there in the 8th. We had our opportunities, very similar to the game on Saturday night, we had our opportunities, we just, I think we struck out 30 times over the course of those two games. But credit Lamkin, he threw the ball extremely well. And, yeah, it's part of it and that's the reason why they're moving on.

Q. You said that you're going to learn a lot from this

team, from this postseason run. What's the biggest takeaway that you've had, that you have after this has come to an end?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Well, I think, you know, for future teams, if we ever are in this situation again, we're struggling a little bit half way through the year, whatever, we can -- I've been through it now, right? So I've got some experiences, I got some, you know, lessons that I've learned along the way.

This team never quit. There's a lot of people that said a lot of negative things about us this year and, you know, we kind of deserved it at times. We didn't play as well as we should. But these guys stayed the course and it's not that, you know, they believed what they were hearing, but it's just a different world we live in with social media and so much access to different platforms as far as what the players hear.

But to get them to a point where -- you know, we were fighting two things, like I said. I repeated it over and over. We were fighting the .500 mark and fighting the SEC mark. And you know, what they did is nothing short of remarkable, to have to go to Georgia and win two out of three and then go to Stillwater and go to Clemson and then lose a really tough game on Saturday and then we end up beating NC State by a run, and the game obviously this morning against Kentucky, another national seed. I mean, we accomplished an awful lot. And I think, I think that's the thing that, when we start having our exit meetings -- everybody's so disappointed right now, it's hard to put all this in words and try to encompass everybody's feelings and try to put it into a few sentences of what this season meant. It really comes down to those one-on-one meetings you have with your players at the end. Yeah, like I said, like you're going full speed ahead, and you win the game this morning, and you go back to the hotel, everybody's in a good mood, we're feeling really good about tonight, and it just didn't go our way, as simple as that, and Texas A&M deserves to move on.

Q. The young arms, obviously up and down throughout the course of the season, but a lot of 'em did step up postseason. What do you want them to gain or how do you think that experience will kind of help going into next season for the guys that return?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: Well, hopefully it's like a normal progression that you see from year to year. We have got a couple freshmen that have grown up, so to speak, but there's some more growth that has to happen. But there was some tremendous improvements and hopefully this experience out here, going through the rigors of the SEC, hopefully will, you know, push them to another level next

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

year because we're going to have, we're obviously going to have to have them make one more jump.

Q. One last Jac question. When people talk to you, like pro scouts and stuff, what do you tell them about him, what kind of player this guy can be?

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN: There's, there hasn't been a whole lot of discussion with scouts. Obviously, he's a consensus top-3 pick probably in the draft. But the things I do mention -- it's obvious that he's got special hitting ability -- but what he's been able to do at the other parts of his game, defensively he's just a difference maker on that side of the ball. Just -- like he runs the bases really good. We were down I think five at one point, at that point of the game and he made the right decision not to tag, because his run did not matter when the ball's hit down the left field line. He makes really good decisions. And he runs good. I mean, if you think about it, we put the drag on with two outs with Tyler, who was scuffling a little bit in the first game and, you know, he got to third on the ball in the dirt and then he scored on that drag.

So those are the things that I try to point out, because the other ones, the other stuff with the hitting ability and the power, that's obvious to see, everybody knows that, but he's really turned himself into a complete player.

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