

2025 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 13, 2025

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Coastal Carolina Chanticleers

Coach Kevin Schnall

Cameron Flukey

Blake Barthol

Wells Sykes

Postgame Press Conference



Coastal Carolina - 7, Arizona - 4

KEVIN SCHNALL: We've got a dugout full of bunch of hungry and humble dogs. Luckily for us, today, we just executed a couple more pitches than they did.

You can clearly see how that team went to Chapel Hill, won two games. A really good team, took a lot of good swings today. Wells ran down a couple of balls in center field.

We were able to induce a big double play, and again we were able to get a couple of big hits when it really mattered, and that big inning in the eighth was really critical.

Q. Can you speak a bit about going out there, what the game plan was trying to keep you guys in that game, going out and attacking the Arizona hitters?

CAMERON FLUKEY: It's the same as always, going and attacking the plate, trusting what your coach calls, not making the moment too big, too much about yourself, and helping your team win.

Q. Blake, you've all had a lot of games this postseason where you got behind early or you were tied late in the game and have kept coming back and kept winning. What's been the secret to that kind of streak?

BLAKE BARTHOL: The pitching staff. I mean, when they give up less than five runs a game, we can breathe and just relax in the box and eventually the runs will come.

Q. Blake, just talk about your game a little bit and blowing that open there in the eighth inning and just your approach after that moment.

BLAKE BARTHOL: Got to a 3-1 count, was just trying to relax and stay back. I started pretty early and could see the pitch down the middle. That's why I got 3-1. I was able to smack it.

Q. Wells, the bottom of the order had a heck of a day today going 8-for-16 -- 6, 7, 8, 9. 24-game winning streak. Top to bottom the line up is very good. Seventh inning or later, .394 batting average as a team with an 1.165 OPS, do you attribute it to more good coaching, good scouting, or is that an approach-at-the-plate mentality?

WELLS SYKES: Yeah, it definitely goes into preparation from our coaches. I think it's just the mentality that we have in the dugout.

Like Blake was saying, we can trust our pitchers to keep us close in the ball game, we can relax, and we can trust the process and I don't think any of our lineup guys are getting nervous or feeling too much under pressure, we're just going up there with the same plan and same consistency and just attacking the plan.

Q. Wells, you've had a knack for some big hits in this run, and I think that's something like five multi-hit games your last eight. Seems like you're dialed right now. I'm curious, what's been the key for you playing your best baseball this time of year?

WELLS SYKES: This is probably my last -- this is my last year of college eligibility. And I'm giving it everything I've got for this team. And I've got a ton of respect for my teammates and my coaches, and I think the big crowds and the loud environments are helping.

I think not just me but my teammates, we're locked in. We're on a crazy win streak. We're really consistent. So I think that's helped everybody, not just me.



Q. Cameron, a bunch of us media were surprised you pitched today. Was there a point that Coach told you you were going to get into the game or were you surprised at all?

CAMERON FLUKEY: Going in, I know I was coming out of the pen after Eikhoff. It was about helping the team win, keeping us in the game or closing the game, doing whatever I needed to do to help the team win.

Q. Now that you guys have won this game, you're somewhat in the driver's seat going into Sunday's winners' bracket game. Just knowing that you guys have gotten an opportunity now to put yourself in that situation, just talk about going into Sunday a little bit knowing that that situation is right there in front of y'all.

BLAKE BARTHOL: I mean, first game win is huge. Kind of brings pressure off the shoulders a little bit. But we've got a game plan and we're going to stick to it.

CAMERON FLUKEY: I think it's just -- I think we're just going to go into it like we do every other game and have an off day tomorrow and get after it on Sunday.

WELLS SYKES: I am with Blake and Cam, our consistency has shown and we're just going to attack the plan every day.

Q. Wells down there in the 9 hole, it does feel like he's kind of been that silent assassin a little bit for you guys. Maybe overlooked by some of the bigger name guys, but he's been clutch for you during this run. I'm curious if you could kind of comment on what has made him so successful and what you saw from him when you recruited him this year and what he's delivered for you?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Basically besides Caden Bodine, he's the only guy in our lineup that was a Division I .300 hitter before coming into this year. He hit .300 last year at the Citadel.

He's got guts. He's great under tension and stress. He lives for those moments. And you nailed it. He's had some massive hits this postseason starting the conference tournament. But I'm really proud of him because he's really worked hard and he really bought into the Coastal way day one.

Q. I'm curious on the strategy of going Eikhoff to start the game and then Flukey coming in after him. I asked Coach Hale what was working for the two of them. He

really complimented Eikhoff on the sink that he had on his fastball and the curve going into the lefties.

KEVIN SCHNALL: The strategy was Cameron Flukey is as good as a right-handed pitcher as there is in the entire country. To have Eikhoff lead it off, and he's more of a sinker/slider guy and Flukey is more of a ride guy, gives you two different looks, and ultimately it worked out today.

Q. You were here with the 2016 team that won the title on the staff, how is it different this time being the head man and it being your second trip?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Well, the processes are the same. The responsibilities are a little bit different. I've got to talk behind the mic more. Sometimes I like to be in the weeds and look at scouting reports and go out the back door and not have to talk to anybody. So that is a little bit of an adjustment.

But like I say all the time, you're only as good as the people you surround yourself with. We were absolutely able to hire one of the premier staffs in the entire country, and they make me look really good.

Q. Dean hasn't gotten an at-bat before the Fairfield game since April 27th. Talk about how he slotted into the lineup and his at-bats today.

KEVIN SCHNALL: Dean was arguably one of our best offensive players at multiple times throughout this year, and unfortunately he had an injury. He's worked really hard to come back. And we discussed it at length last night as a staff, and we went with Dean today. And he really stepped up big time, especially after that first at-bat where he strikes out, bases loaded, no outs. To come back and get, deliver two hits after that. That's not easy to do.

You look at C-Bas, Sebastian Alexander, he struck out three times today. And that dog mentality came through. That was a massive hit in the eighth to get Blake Barthol up to the box. And when Blake got that hit, we hit the trifecta. We scored first. We got the big inning, and we got to seven. Dinner reservations were made.

Q. You have one heck of a back stop in Bodine. He ties the program record for career runners thrown out. He did it in the top of the first inning. Bottom of the first inning, he leads off with a hit. Could you comment on how he set the tone today?

KEVIN SCHNALL: I think that's being kind -- one heck of a back stop. He's the best back stop in the entire country, hands down, non-negotiable. And we're really lucky to



have that guy on our team the last three years.

And like I've said since January, I'm just upset it's only got one more year to watch it. Now I look at it. We only have a couple more weeks to watch it. That guy is going to play in the Major Leagues.

Q. My question was going to be about Sebastian and that hit having struck out the three times before. What did you see in terms of your team's composure? All those hits in the eighth inning came with two outs. What did you see from him just being able to approach and get that hit there?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Well, he had three strikeouts. And to their pitchers' credit, they have good stuff. As good as our offense was, there was a lot of times we didn't do a good job of deciphering the difference between a strike and a ball. Way too many chases. And that put us in bad situations.

He had three strikeouts today, but he just has that mentality. He's that kind of kid where he's just going to rise up to those moments.

And, again, we were up, but that hit was really big. And then obviously Blake's double to get us that big inning, that was the nail in the coffin.

Q. There's been so many fearless moments on this run. Where do you think all this confidence on this team comes from?

KEVIN SCHNALL: It's a good question. If I had that answer, I'd be a multibillionaire. I don't know. At the end of the day, we just try to attack our one-day plan. We keep our head down. We stay humble, stay very hungry. And our attention to detail, we feel like our attention to detail is what separates us day in, day out.

Q. You had one of the best pitching staffs in the country for the entire season. What's been the key of developing this pitching staff, especially since it's mostly guys that have been in your program for a couple of years?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Listen, our pitchers are executing the pitches, but I'd be remiss if I didn't comment on our pitching coach, Matt Williams. He's an elite -- there's a lot of people out there that are coaches. This guy's different. He's a teacher. He motivates. He inspires. He's demanding. He's aggressive. He's consistent. That's what separates him.

And he's injected a lot of confidence into our pitching staff.

And that's a big reason why we have one of the premier pitching staffs in the country.

Q. You went obviously with Cameron and Riley today. Their pitch counts were not very high. So going back to '16 you guys had to piecemeal that group, those pitchers all the way through to win the national championship. I'm assuming that, with these guys not being up there in pitch count that you can bring these guys back relatively quickly if need be.

KEVIN SCHNALL: That's a good offense. They made Flukey work. He went four innings and threw 71 pitches. So we're going to have to manage him a little bit. Eikhoff was only at 45. He's as efficient as anybody in the country, four innings, 45 pitches.

So Eikhoff absolutely will be able to bounce back quick. But our focus is on the next game and the next game is going to be Jacob Morrison.

Q. Blake, right now the run that he's on, seems like he's been really, again, consistently excellent for you down this whole run. Does it feel like he's where he was when he was red hot at the start of last year or is he even better than that. What was the key for you to kind of bring him back to this level of performance?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Well, Blake Barthol is one of the most complete players to ever play as Coastal. I mean, you look at his full game, power, speed, short game, defense, base running, he does it all.

This guy was a walk-on that just showed up to Labor Day camp. He was No. 53 redshirt. Backfield. Name wasn't even circled. It's an unbelievable story. He's a worker. He's a grinder, and I'm really happy for him.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports