

2025 Men's College World Series

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Steven Milam

Casan Evans

Jared Jones

Postgame Press Conference

LSU - 9 , UCLA - 5

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by LSU head coach Jay Johnson and student-athletes Casan Evans, Jared Jones and Steven Milam.

JAY JOHNSON: Great win for our team. Really proud of them -- the mindset piece, the disruption of the game last night because of weather. I thought the response in the first inning, after giving up three, to come back and score four was very much in character for our team.

I think Anthony did a good job settling in and getting us two zeros. And then really good first inning, as I mentioned, with two-strike hits by Steven, Jake Brown, setting the table for Jared's homer. It got us off and rolling. Big two-out hit by Luis in the third inning yesterday.

And I love the tempo that Casan set today. I thought he was outstanding as he always is.

And, again, good job by our offense. Two outs, nobody on. Get a couple of guys on and get them in with more really good two-strike hitting. And Casan continued to do his thing and turned it over to Cooper. Got us a big out. And Chase was awesome again.

And get reset, get ready for tomorrow night.

Q. Jared, going back to last night, your home run and the four runs you all had in that inning, you turned the momentum completely around on them. As Coach Savage said, they were always having to battle back the whole game. How important was that? What did it



feel like getting that four-run inning and take the lead?

JARED JONES: It was big for us. I think Anthony does a better job as the game goes along. I knew he would settle in and do his deal.

And offensively we just wanted to start the game on the right note. We talk about winning every inning. Obviously they put up a three spot in the top half, so to win the inning we've got to put up at least four. And it just so happened.

That's how the game works sometimes. And we just kind of stuck with it, got off to a good start, took quality at-bats all game long. And it led to a lot of success and a lot of runs on the board.

Q. Casan, were you going to pitch last night after the delay? Or did you find out that it was just going to be today? And just what was your mindset going in with the delays and so forth?

CASAN EVANS: Yeah, Coach Johnson had told me that once we got out of the delay that I would be on the mound, and then it got rolled over to today. Just went back to the hotel and got ready for today. Woke up early.

The mindset stays the same no matter when I come in the game, if I start or if I close. I was just going out there and doing my best to help my team win.

Q. Steven, great start of the game yesterday. You have the break. You come out. Also individually you have two really good halves of this game. Can you take me through kind of your approach to the restart and now UCLA's throwing a bunch of different looks at you guys? I'm not quite sure if you even saw the same arm twice.

STEVEN MILAM: My approach stays the same always. Just trying to get a pitch that I can drive. I gotta take what they're giving me. And I have good hitters around me that do their job.

Just taking good swings. We faced probably four different



guys. Different looks are sometimes tough, but just gotta stay locked in, dialed in. Coach Johnson does a good job with the whole team getting us dialed in on that.

Q. One of the guys we talked about down the stretch at the end of the regular season was getting Steven back on track offensively. Obviously a big day. Seems like he's seeing the ball much better. Anything you've been working with on him offensively to get him more in a groove out here?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, he's got a great feel for baseball. He's usually pretty quick to make adjustments. I think he's had an outstanding year again. I think when you play in our league and you face really good pitching, you're going to have that weekend where maybe you go 2-for-11 or those types of things.

The defense hasn't wavered. He's been phenomenal. I think he has four errors on the entire season. Made some key plays today, including the first ball as the game got started.

As far as the performance in the NCAA Tournament, it's just really stacking quality at-bats. And when he's focused on that and not trying to do too much, as he said, taking what the pitcher gives him, he's a really good player.

I think it kind of can go unnoticed with our team. It's more than talent. It's really skilled baseball players, and he's at the top of that. So when you have that kind of skill, you can make adjustments quickly and usually not stay down for long.

Q. I'm sure your pitching plan was to get more than three innings out of Anthony. Nothing you can do about that. But how do you adjust with that? And where does that leave your pitching having to use Casan like you did?

JAY JOHNSON: I think never look too far down the road in this tournament. I think you can get yourself in trouble with that. I think if you win the first two with only maybe three guys unavailable for the next game you've probably done a pretty good job. That's probably where we're at. I need to look at it a little closer.

Don't have a pitching plan for tomorrow because we don't know who we're playing yet, via Arkansas or UCLA. Both are capable of winning that ball game tonight. We'll stay in tune with that and then adjust.

And that's what this tournament is at times. Had delays here, night games that ended up being day games the next day. I'm just really proud the way the team handled all

that.

Q. You talked a few days ago about your desire to go through the winners' bracket. Now you're 2-0, congratulations on that. How do you look in the past and say, we've been in that position before, and how do you prevent that happening to you?

JAY JOHNSON: I think that's a great question and what I always tell the players everything is training for something. We were in a similar situation in the regional. And the team played very good.

And whoever we're playing next is fighting for their season. So, you have to bring the same type of intensity to counterbalance that focus and that motivation of that team.

I thought we did an excellent job of that in the super regional last week, I think we've done an excellent job of it here.

I think it's not just winning, to us; it's how we win and how we get better at this craft of trying to be one of the elite college baseball teams in the country. And my message to them will be just to use their experience well.

Q. Most of your hits and runs came off of two outs, when there are two outs still in the inning. Kind of talk about your approach from Frey, Curiel, Jake Brown, just stepping up in the big moment, being patient and finding the pitch to hit and getting you all going.

JAY JOHNSON: I think it kind of goes back to that skill portion of baseball that I talked about. We certainly have great talent. Those guys you just listed off have great talent. But they're focused on what the game requires to win and their ability to stay within themselves, not try to do too much.

And it's kind of special when you get to this time of year because nobody's thinking about anything but winning. And that's what we want our program to be about, is always placing the needs of the team above your own.

Trying to do too much is not a plan; it's immaturity. And those guys have really grown and matured as hitters and players. Fortunately for us, those guys you mentioned, we played them a lot last year, and they went through some of those growing pains. And seeing some of the fruits of that labor now.

Q. Obviously I'm sure you felt Casan was a really talented player or you wouldn't have recruited him, but you never know how freshmen will react in development. Was there a point in this season where

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

you could have projected ahead and say, when we get in these big situations I'm going to be able to count on him to do the job?

JAY JOHNSON: It's a valid point, because freshmen don't transition to the SEC or the highest level of college baseball like him very often. That's a very natural thought. But if you know this dude, it's the least surprising thing of the season, actually.

I mentioned this the other day -- I can't remember when it was -- when we recruited him and got him, it was a big deal. Like I said, I canceled a trip to see one of my best friends get married because he was coming on the second visit. That's how important I thought that was at the time.

And getting him through the draft, and just how he talks, how he carries himself -- dad is a high school coach, mom is a superstar, brothers are great -- and he's got ability. And very rarely do you get that combination of talent, makeup, character, maturity that's ready for what we have to do. He has it.

So in general, yes. Surprising, knowing Casan, not really that surprising.

Q. Your coaching background has been West Coast -- Arizona, Nevada and even San Diego, which I find very interesting that UCLA really didn't deal with a whole lot of weather issues this season. Whereas, it's been a steady theme for you throughout the NCAA Tournament. You talked a lot about it prior to your regional and the whole scheduling and scheduling the first game rather than the night game in the Baton Rouge Regional. What have you learned from your tenure in Baton Rouge?

JAY JOHNSON: Probably that the best weather for college baseball is in Tucson, Arizona. I'm very underqualified coaching in Reno, San Diego and Tucson.

It becomes part of it. And as I mentioned, everything is training for something. It wasn't just the regional, super regional. We played, like, four games at 10:00 p.m. this year, and finished a couple in 1:30 in the morning.

Luckiest guy in the world because our fans will stay. We'll have to work on their alarm clocks because the send-off for the team was a little late this morning at 7:45. But they're night people. And provided we stay on schedule, hopefully we'll have them back out tomorrow.

Q. The way that Derek's playing and the contribution you got from Casan, what have you seen from that freshmen class broadly, and how impressed are you

by the talent that exists with this group?

JAY JOHNSON: It's pretty awesome. We had to get on it like right away. Like, this is a few years in the making. This just didn't happen overnight. It's not football recruiting where the guy flips on signing day and that sort of thing.

Derek, I was pretty confident he was going to come to Arizona. So the relationship had been built. And then when I came to LSU that one happened pretty quickly.

Casan was one of those, like, in the normal recruiting period, September 1st of the junior year, and you're fighting everybody to get him.

And there's more. I mean, John Pearson pinch-hit in that game, William Schmidt, Mavrick Rzy -- Cooper Williams has been great for us down the stretch. And there's seven of them that are on this roster.

I would bet that's probably the most of any that's in the College World Series. And it's just that "talent meets character meets ready for the moment" type group.

But it's been, like, three or however long I've been here now, it's my fourth year, four years in the making from, Derek was probably the first one. We got Cooper last July because of a coaching change.

So I'm very excited to have that as the foundation of going forward. As you can see, they're ready to help us win here now.

Q. Going back to the weather and stuff, the way it was setting up, the way Anthony had settled in, when all that happened last night, take us back, how frustrated were you and what was going through your mind?

JAY JOHNSON: As you get older in coaching, something I try to get better at is not worry about things that I cannot control, whether it's NCAA rules or the weather.

If I could have the power to push back lightning and rainstorm, I probably wouldn't be a college baseball coach. But I want to set a good example for the team, you know what I mean? If I'm frustrated, making it a thing, then they're going to make it a thing. And it's my job to lead and not make it a thing.

So that's what I chose to do. You've got some of the smartest people in the NCAA running this deal. They thought we had a window now and hopefully -- the sun's out, and hopefully it stays out and we can get the tournament back on track.



But I told the players, we literally finished the game like 13 hours later than we would have. So it's only a big deal if we make it a big deal.

Q. You've talked in the past about, I don't know if it was Arizona or not, how your season ended in 24 hours. You're going into a situation like that potentially today, I guess. How much did that ever enter your head and how important was it -- every win is important, I get it -- but how important was it to avoid that situation?

JAY JOHNSON: I met with Nate and Jamie last night once we got back to the hotel, and we mapped out the bracket and all scenarios of how we were going to attack it because again it's a double-elimination tournament. It's not a death sentence to lose a game here.

Like I said, we've lost that game and been to the finals twice after losing that game that we just played in. It's important.

But me adding that to our team is not going to help them play the way they are capable of playing. Maybe it wouldn't matter because I believe in their mental strength so much. Obviously important, but focusing on what we need to do well in the game was the entirety of the discussions with the team.

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