

# 2025 Men's College World Series

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Louisville Cardinals**

**Coach Dan McDonnell**

**Eddie King Jr.**

Postgame Press Conference

Coastal Carolina - 11, Louisville - 3

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Louisville head coach Dan McDonnell and student-athlete Eddie King Jr.

DAN MCDONNELL: I gotta congratulate Coastal Carolina. Man, they're 56 wins, it's impressive, the streak they're on. Just not easy to win that consistently in baseball, the sport of baseball.

In college, yeah, there are teams that can stack up a bunch of wins. But, I don't know, 25 or six or whatever they've got in a row, man, that's impressive. That says a lot about their kids.

I always challenge our guys to be professional. Be a pro and show up every day. And to not like have a mental letdown, to not show up with 100 percent.

Obviously give credit to their coaches because they've got those guys on point. They're a well-oiled machine. They're efficient. And they've obviously put themselves in a great position. So, congratulations to them.

I've known Kevin for a long time. I know how hard he's worked. That's his program. He's been a part of that program for a long time. So he's put in a lot of effort and hours to recruit and coach and keep that program one of the top programs in college baseball. So, congratulate him.

But I'll hand it over to Eddie and questions and my word's just going to be joy. I'm filled with a lot of joy for this guy to my left and our team, our program. I'm just super proud of them.

Yeah, I hate losing today. Don't get me wrong. I wanted to coach them tomorrow. But it's hard for me not to be filled



with joy for how this season went and how we got back into this place and made a good run at it.

**Q. Eddie, obviously you come to a place like Louisville to play in Omaha. How much pride do you take in being part of the team that got Louisville back here?**

EDDIE KING JR.: I'm just grateful to be along for this journey and just be one of the people or one of the teams that can go down in the history books for Louisville.

This is a special team and I'm just sad that it came to an end today. But I'm just grateful.

**Q. Eddie, Riley Eikhoff mentioned in his presser that he used a lot of offspeed to keep you guys off balance. Was that what you were seeing personally and what your teammates were talking about in the dugout?**

EDDIE KING JR.: I saw a lot of offspeed pitches. He's a good pitcher. He knows how to pitch. We came up short today, but I felt like we did a good job in the box overall, but just didn't get it going when we should have.

**Q. Yesterday in the press conference, Coach was talking about your personal journey. And after a junior season that, to some players, feel like you may have lost having returned to a program that in the preseason the ACC the head coaches selected you guys to finish ninth in the standings, and yet you were one of the four teams left standing in college baseball this season. Could you elaborate on your journey throughout this season and your mindset through your own adversity in the year?**

EDDIE KING JR.: It's been a long journey, ups and downs. We started off pretty good. We went through bumps in the road. But I think we just did well as a team. We always fought back. I know we surprised a lot of people, but we always knew we had it in us. We just brought it out at the right time.

I think this team is just so resilient, just the things that we did all year, even guys fighting injuries, like Alex, Pike, it



just goes to show this group is really special. And we just have a lot of talent, and we proved it this year.

**Q. From the beginning of the year, before the season even starts, you're the Ali Scholarship winner at the lead-off dinner, to the run you go on with all the homers and the people chanting your name. Can you summarize a little bit what this entire experience and this extra year has meant to you?**

EDDIE KING JR.: I'm honestly just really glad it worked out this way. Like I always say, everything happens for a reason. You've just got to trust God's plan. I was just meant to be here for another year. And I'm so glad I took that because I got to be with this special group of brothers and got one more year with Coach Mack, got to learn from him another year.

Just the whole year, I can't ask for much more. I loved the whole ride.

**Q. Obviously there's a lot of, even though you wanted to continue playing with them, there's a lot of young talent coming back next year. What is your message to those guys like the Jakes, the Ethans, the Zions?**

EDDIE KING JR.: Just keep working. This year it goes to show just anything can happen. Anything is possible no matter what team, what school, whatever. Just bring the group next year together, just build a special bond and just go to work together. Just always fight. Never give up. Just keep doing it.

**Q. You've coached a lot of really good teams, you've coached against a lot of really good teams. What is it about Coastal that makes them so difficult to beat right now in the middle of the winning streak?**

DAN MCDONNELL: They obviously do the three things so well. I think what's impressive, are they scoring in the first inning? Like it feels like they score in the first inning, especially out here in Omaha. It's, like, they just get right out of the gate and they just put that pressure on you.

You've got to pitch. And I mean, they're throwing guys with really good numbers. They've got multiple guys. It's not like they've got really good pieces there.

I don't see them enough throughout the year. I mean, they look like they play good enough defense. But they definitely pitch. And, man, they're offensive. It just shows you, the recipe for baseball, it's a simple concept. It's just not easy to get there.

I'm so impressed, from a distance, the little I saw of them.

But having seen them up close and personal, and, again, I don't know how you overlook the win streak.

I brag about I was part of a team, we won 25 in a row. We were 26-1 at the Citadel my sophomore year. And then we went through some bumps and ups and downs. But we end up making a run to Omaha.

And I always look back. You win 25 in a row, you've got something special there. And we showed it in the postseason. The Citadel went to Omaha.

These guys, ooh, they've done it in the last half of the season, in the conference tournament, in the regionals, in supers, in Omaha, against as we say against the best teams. It's impressive what they've done.

**Q. Similar to the question I asked Eddie -- I'm not going to ask you to compare Omaha trips, that's not fair -- but how special is this one given that you got back and were able to reset that standard?**

DAN MCDONNELL: I've been maybe comparing this one a little bit to '07. '07 was the first time we got here and I just remember the excitement making the regionals that year and playing free and having fun. And that was an older group, a tough group.

So, yeah, to go in '13, okay, we weren't a one-hit wonder. To go in '14, it's okay, we're a regular at the table. We had a run there from '12 to, whatever, '19 or '20, where, man, we were just a machine. That was fun.

But then we obviously took a step back as a program. And so the last few years, man, it's been tough. I mean, I've talked about it openly, won't get real deep into it, but it's been bleak.

So be careful how high you set the bar. Don't set the kids up to fail. Are we really getting the support to go to Omaha and win a national championship? And it's, like, you're trying to find that balance as a coach.

As I said, this year my whole message was win the ACC. That's all I kept saying, win the ACC, win the ACC. Because if you can do damage in that league, you're more than prepared to make a run through the postseason.

And the league was so balanced. There was so much parity. I think we're going into the last weekend, we could finish, like, second or, like, 12th. It was just crazy.

So just knowing we were in the postseason, there was a peace and a calmness there. There was a joy there. But there was a chip on their shoulder, the way we finished.



For me, yeah, there's a lot of similarities to our first trip here. And I'm very appreciative. I have a lot of gratitude. Like I said, for me, the word is joy. I've got a lot of joy for this group and the journey we've been on.

**Q. Knowing what it took to get that many College World Series appearances in that span of time and knowing the young talent you have coming back, what can this experience do for them in terms of maintaining that standard like that run you guys had 10 years ago?**

DAN MCDONNELL: Well, you hope they now know I'm not full of crap. Excuse my language. Because you feel like you've been preaching stuff the last few years and it just hasn't been working.

And then kids lose faith, lose hope. Recruits lose faith, lose hope. It's, like, maybe this guy, maybe this program is not what it says it was. For a kid like Eddie to sit up here and, you come to Louisville. I mean, we stick our chest out.

We try to stay humble and hungry. But when you're recruiting someone, it's like, hey, man, this is what we do. Eddie's got his degree. Academic success. We had the highest team GPA in the men's athletic program at the university. It's like 40 kids. We had the highest GPA award winner here in Omaha.

They used to give out a team award. We got two plaques hanging in our office. I'm going to have to get on the NCAA or somebody. What happened to the highest team GPA award? I was sitting there the other night kind of confidently thinking, where is Rachel, our academic coordinator? She's about to walk up and get this nice award that we have in our office. But they didn't give it out.

Community service, Kamau Neighbors is one of the Lou Gehrig Award, community service award winners. And we serve. We took, I don't know, 20 guys to the hospital the other day. I didn't make them go. I didn't want to be involved because I didn't want them to feel guilty into -- because they know how much Coach Mack likes if you serve. I didn't want to be part of that.

I let Chris Morgan, our FCA director, send it out. There were like 20 guys. You say "off day," but practice and then long night the night before, just to spend time at the children's hospital.

And then player development. We take so much pride in helping these kids get better, not just on the field. Believe me, there's a baseball aspect to our development, but the

older I get, the longer I do this, wait a second, you've got to pour into these kids.

I've been on this team more about tipping than I ever have. Trying to prepare these kids, what's it mean to leave a dollar to somebody who is serving you, \$2, \$3. Show your appreciation.

And all the things we poured into these kids, just wanting them to cross the line and be better off, better off than when they got here. Not that they're bad when we get them. I always give a lot of credit to the parents, but you want them to be better than when they got here -- mature, ready for the real world.

And then our big league success. It's pretty cool getting text messages from all the pro guys, all the guys in the big leagues. Dalton Rushing has been following us as closely as anybody. Henry Davis flew here with Paul Skenes on his off day.

We take a lot of pride in that. That's important to kids. And that's why I keep saying this guy that was sitting to my left, this dude's ready for pro ball. Jake Munroe is ready for pro ball. Matt Klein is ready for pro ball. Patrick Forbes and Tucker Biven and others. These guys are ready.

I can't promise you you're going to make it to the big leagues but they're ready. These guys are going to move through the system.

I think I'm still answering the question as to what was this year like. Man, this year was a lot. This year was a lot. While I've got the mic, I'm on joy, right? Let me build off of joy.

There's a quote here from a pastor: Grimness is not a Christian virtue. If God is really at the center of one's life and being, joy is inevitable. If we have no joy, we have missed the heart of the Good News."

The Good News. And that's for me, I've been entrenched in the Good News this year. That's where, for my heart, I'm 169 days in the bible recap, which Tara-Leigh Cobble is freakin' awesome. It's awesome. If you've never read the bible, I promise you, this is a way you can do it.

And as I encourage people, grab a friend, grab a husband, grab a wife, grab your buddies, get in one of these studies; they're awesome. And so for me, another priest put it simpler: Joy is the surest sign of the presence of God. And for me, I don't want anybody to look at me and go that guy's holier than thou, because I'm not holier than thou, far from that. But, man, I got joy because of my walk with the Lord. I have a choice to be a sad saint or express,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

hopefully, my joy in the light in unbridled thankfulness. So I just have a lot to be thankful for.

I'm thankful to be in the ACC. This is an awesome baseball league. I'm thankful to be the head coach at the University of Louisville. My wife and I just love it, just love it. As hard as the last few years have been, oh, my gosh, they've been hard, but we're very thankful.

Terry, I'm thankful for you. No, serious, because this dude's standing out there in February after a win or a loss, and he's seen, I guess, my best and worst, but this dude's been there.

I've got no problem with people that jump on the bandwagon anytime you want, we'll take you, no judgment. We always say that: No judgment. But you were there from the get-go.

I appreciate that. But I know our players appreciate it. And I think our fans appreciate it because somebody needs to cover that.

Listen, we come from an awesome basketball tradition. Awesome. So I get it. Support our basketball and let's make a run into March and deep into March. And then hey, by the way, we've got this thing called the Kentucky Derby. Haven't heard of it? Pretty big deal in our city and it's awesome. Love being -- literally across the street from Jim Patterson Stadium. So we have a lot going on in the spring.

So, yeah, we've got to fight a little bit for our PR at times, but, man, the way it ended at Jim Patterson, that super regional, I couldn't have scripted it any better, to go on the road for a super regional, host a super regional. Let me take it back, we could have won about four more games. I could have scripted it a little better.

But I think for me, I just have to make sure people see me here when we're on top of the world, but, you know, when you lose and your season comes to an end and it's crushing, I want people to go, man, I want to drink what that guy's drinking; there's something about that guy, not because of Dan McDonnell, it's because of my walk with the Lord. That's my responsibility.

I hope anybody who listens is intrigued or curious, because it's a special journey to be on. And as we talked about journey all year, man, this has been an awesome journey, so we're going to try to keep this thing going.

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