

2025 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 20, 2025

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Coastal Carolina Chanticleers

Coach Kevin Schnall

Jacob Morrison

Blake Barthol

Caden Bodine

Press Conference



Fallon; my wife, Megan. They're the ones that have made the ultimate sacrifice to allow me to do what I do. And there's nobody that I want to make more proud of me than them just because I'm so proud of them.

Q. Jacob, Coach ran through the entire staff. Specifically Matt Williams, first year on the coaching staff. What has he helped you most throughout the year and kind of overall pitching philosophy with the team?

JACOB MORRISON: So his pitching philosophy is that we have really good stuff and that we're going to attack the plate, in his words, and trust ourselves dominating teams that way.

But helping me mostly was figuring out what works for me and what works for my body. I'm a pretty big kid. A lot of times I don't really need those coil things like that, that shorter kids use to get velocity. He just really worked to design certain things that work for me and work for my body and getting the most out of me.

Q. Being on a 26-game winning streak, what does it take mentally, what's the preparation to be ready to go and what you've done to get there to this point?

BLAKE BARTHOL: So, I mean, we've been grinding now for 10 months. So that's been our preparation and we have a game plan, as Coach Schnall has put together. And as long as we execute, everything will work out.

Q. Blake and Caden, Coach Schnall emphasizes scoring first often. Not always is it top of the order, but in the first inning in the three games you've played here you've scored eight runs. Can you just talk about that mentality going into the first inning and how well the staff scouts for you guys?

CADEN BODINE: I think it just starts with quality at-bats. The numbers don't lie. When you score first, get to seven, win the big inning war. We really take pride in that. We try to execute that every single game.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coastal Carolina head coach Kevin Schnall and student-athletes Blake Barthol, Caden Bodine and Jacob Morrison.

KEVIN SCHNALL: I fill this seat with gratitude. I'd like to start by just expressing my gratitude first to our players. In June, when I was awarded this job, these guys, their level of commitment, the sacrifices they made, the investment that these guys put into this year, I'm grateful.

Secondly is our staff. We talk a lot about you're only as good as the people that you're around day after day. I'm fortunate to have a staff that challenges me that motivates me, that makes me better. Our associate head coach, Chad Oxendine; our pitching coach, Matt Williams; our infield hitting coach, Matt Schilling; our director of baseball operations, Mickey Beach; our director of player development, Tyler Shewmaker; our assistant director of player development, Connor Owings; our director of analytics, Matt Pepin; our strength and conditioning coach, Michael Thomson; our athletic trainer, Amanda Roithmayr; our equipment manager, Jordan Bowman; our sport oversight associate athletic director, Bryan Styles. I'm fortunate to be on their team. They make me better every day.

Thirdly, our student managers. These guys invest more time into our program or as much time in our program as anybody else. Our student managers play just as big a role in our success as Jacob Morrison, as Caden Bodine, and we're in this position today because of the sacrifices and work ethic of them.

And lastly, my family. Our kids, Sydney, Jayden and



BLAKE BARTHOL: Exactly what Bodine said. (Laughter).

Q. Jacob, I'm sure the moment you show up at Coastal, everyone talks about that 2016 season. So how do you go through an entire year and get to this point, while also knowing that there's that history, maybe not looming above you guys, but it's definitely sort of there in the background?

JACOB MORRISON: I wouldn't say it's looming at all. I would say it's more inviting than anything. The 2016 team, there's a good amount of them that came back and the amount of support and the amount of times that they've reached out to us has been unbelievable.

Like Anthony Marks, I know he was a big part of that program. He's been by our side. He texts a lot of us before every game.

You go even further you have Connor Owings on our staff. He was on that team, and he was one of the best players. It's really inviting to have that type of culture around, such a great winning culture.

Q. Obviously you won a ton of games. Could you speak to the aura or charisma that comes with that? A team on a heater like that is often hard to beat, right, because of the belief you guys obviously have in yourselves. What does it do for you knowing that you're playing as well as you are at the right time of the season?

CADEN BODINE: We're really just focused on playing Coastal baseball, honestly. I think our preparation gives us that confidence to go out there and win. So I think that really stems from that.

BLAKE BARTHOL: And the pitching staff has been unbelievable. It allows the position players to relax and just play our game and execute the game plan.

Q. Jacob, talk about the recovery after throwing over 100-plus pitches the other night, your mindset coming into this weekend and how you're feeling after obviously going pretty strong the other evening.

JACOB MORRISON: We're at the point in the year where the recovery is very easy. My routine is so stapled in. We have all this amazing support staff around me that has geared me up to throw every single outing.

Nothing really changes. I threw 109. I don't know if that's the most I've ever thrown. But one more outing in the year. I'll throw 150 if that's what it takes. I don't think anybody really cares. It's postseason now. Recover, get ready.

Q. Caden, talk about your adjustments moving to the lead-off spot after Dean went down with the injury and what you have to do. Obviously you're a guy that gets on base, but just the adjustments you've had to make going to the lead-off spot to better your game.

CADEN BODINE: It was super unfortunate that Dean got hurt. But Coach asked me to bat lead-off and that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to continue to get on base for the guys behind me -- C-bass, Blake, Walker. They do an incredible job of having quality at-bats. I embrace my role and just go out there and do anything it takes.

Q. Blake and Caden and Jacob, I always ask this every year: Your thoughts on LSU, what do you admire just as student-athletes and fans of baseball, what do you like about the Tigers?

JACOB MORRISON: Not a whole lot. (Laughter).

BLAKE BARTHOL: I mean, we're not really worried about the Tigers. We're more of just self-oriented team. We're just focused on our team and our team only.

Q. It seems like the proverbial talk around the national watercooler is that you guys, they want you guys to win over LSU. It seems like you've kind of got the backing of everyone outside of Louisiana. So just talk about having that support maybe from people that don't necessarily watch the Chanticleers all year long, yet they still want you guys to win this weekend?

CADEN BODINE: I think it's awesome to have others to follow our program. But I think we've got to give a lot of credit to Teel Nation. They travel really well and they take pride in rooting for us and we need the energy out there and we appreciate it.

Q. If people see the match-up on paper, LSU against Coastal Carolina, people would probably assume LSU is the favorite. They're the betting favorite. Do you consider yourselves the underdog in the series?

CADEN BODINE: We just like to play Coastal Carolina baseball. We have extreme confidence in everything that we do on both sides of the ball. We're looking forward to competing against them, but I think at the end of the day we take care of business on our side and just really respect the opponent. But honestly playing Coastal baseball is the way to win.

Q. If you look back in history of championship teams here in the College World Series in Omaha, they kind of learn through adversity and dry spells throughout



the year. You guys started the year 10-2. You endured, like, an 8-6 stretch. Started 18-8 for the season. Your final 41 games you're 38-3. Was there anything you learned in March about this team that helped you go on this crazy, incredible run, as Coach stated the other day?

JACOB MORRISON: I would say more than anything we just got a lot closer, like, the culture got better. We decided that we'd rather win than lose. So we went on that crazy run.

BLAKE BARTHOL: I think everyone kind of found their spot on the team, and everybody endured their position. Like Morrison said, we all got closer. We're brothers now. So it's been great.

Q. It's almost become mythic, your ability to receive the ball and make balls turn into strikes. Just talk about the process of catching this pitching staff and the work that you guys have done together as a battery to create something that's really special.

CADEN BODINE: I think they make me look a lot better. They throw the ball where it's supposed to be about 99 percent of the time. It all starts with that. I think it also stems from understanding the pitching staff and the pitching style and realizing what each pitch does and how it moves.

So I think they've made my job extremely easy. And just stems from preparation and we're really proud to have Matt Williams. He's done a great job with the pitching staff as well.

Q. Caden, I've heard you use the expression couple times, so how do you define "Coastal baseball"?

CADEN BODINE: I think just playing short game, playing quality at-bats, throwing competitive strikes and just having timely hitting. I think that's the biggest way and going out there and owning every single thing on the baseball field. And that's Coastal baseball for us.

Q. In addition to obviously making the CWS finals, can you speak to how meaningful it is to have another weekend together, as you mentioned the brotherhood, here?

JACOB MORRISON: I think it's something cherished, especially being in a hotel for nine or 10 days now. It's really fun to be around these boys every day. More baseball means more time around them, and we're very close at this point. It's really fun to be around these boys.

CADEN BODINE: Some of the road trips are definitely some of the best experiences. Having a roommate, all hanging out in the same rooms together, it's a really cool experience. It's something we really are enjoying and we're looking forward to just a few more days.

BLAKE BARTHOL: No matter what happens afterwards, the team might not be as close as it is this year. You just cherish those moments.

Q. What's your message to the Teel Nation back home that can't make it up here to Omaha? They're obviously supporting you. There's a lot of watch parties, a lot of people back at home talking about this team. Just for all three of you all, what's your message for them?

BLAKE BARTHOL: We thank them. We love Teel Nation and everyone that supports us. We love the support, and Chants up.

CADEN BODINE: They're the best support staff in the entire country. We really appreciate them. When we hosted the regional, they were phenomenal.

Coach Schnall has done a great job of expanding the amount of fans that come to a game. We've broken several records at home, which is truly remarkable. And I think we just have a really good fan base that we appreciate and just looking forward to them watching.

JACOB MORRISON: Yeah, they've been unbelievable especially at home in the regionals. It was something special. We can feel the support and the buzz and energy around it, it's really cool.

Q. I'm going to piggyback two questions off of you, if that's okay. I mentioned or I talked to the guys, championship teams usually learn through adversity throughout the season. You began 18-8. You finished 38-3 and you're still playing here today in Omaha. They mentioned possibly learning some roles. Was there some player/personnel things you learned throughout the first two months of the season that have helped you go on this run late in the year?

KEVIN SCHNALL: No, not really. We talk a lot about work while you wait. Injuries are a reality of the season, unfortunately. We've had some injuries. And the guys that were working while they were waiting were ready for their opportunities. And that's what has enabled us to maintain the success that we have this year.

But there's no direct situation that happened. The end of the day, it started in August when we all came together for



the first time. And we feel like what separates Coastal baseball day in and day out is our attention to detail. And we have very high standards and we're very consistent with holding everybody accountable to those standards.

Q. The other day, when I mentioned how do you guys play so consistently, couple answers you gave me were scoring first, winning the big-inning battle. In doing that, over the last 26-game win streak, 23 of those, Walker Mitchell has been batting in the top of the lineup. He began the year, opening weekend, batting ninth for you guys. I feel like maybe -- has he taken some big steps for you guys throughout the season? And in a sport like baseball, it's hard to maintain consistency yet you are 25-1 when he bats in the top four of the lineup?

KEVIN SCHNALL: That's a lot, what you just said. So let me try to figure this out. So scoring first is a big part of our offense, absolutely. We're 37-2 when we score first. When we get to seven, we're 37-1. And when we win the big-inning war we're 42-1. As a collective unit, that's what we're trying to do every single day.

Walker Mitchell is a part of that unit and he's done a great job of finding ways on base. He broke a single season record with hit-by pitches. He can inside game, and he has a lot of really quality at-bats. That's why he's moved himself up in the lineup.

Q. As part of that 2016 staff, what do you remember about Jay Johnson? And how does that experience against him help you this week?

KEVIN SCHNALL: The biggest difference between this year and '16 was all the shampoo and body spray we got every time we showed up to the ballpark. We don't get it this year for some reason. We would like it because we've talked a lot about it. I actually still have some of the body spray from '16. There's not an expiration date. So I'm still using some. (Laughter).

That's the biggest difference and the fact that we didn't lose. But there's no experience we're taking from '16. None of these players were on '16. This team is different than 2016. Our goal every day is to keep a microscopic focus and dominate our one day plan. This team has done that at an extreme high level, and that's why we're one of two teams in the entire country still playing.

Q. Having been part of a CWS team before, at what point did you know that this team had the makeup to get to the point it's at now?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Game 2 of Auburn when we beat them

because then we advanced here.

Again, we're never talking about winning games; it's all about the process and winning pitches and ultimately winning outs, winning innings and bunching quality at-bats together. If we do that day after day, winning is a byproduct. Getting to Omaha is a byproduct. And that's why we're in this position right now.

Q. Who are you going with tomorrow? If you could explain, if you even want to put it out there. Second question, what did you learn in '16 as a coaching staff, because a lot of these guys, you and Shew were on that squad, that could help you as a head coach now prepare for this series -- without the body spray?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Cam Flukey will be starting tomorrow. What did we learn from 2016 that could help us? It's more about next year, honestly. There's a lot of distractions after winning a national championship or being in this position.

It's really important that we stay focused next year on our goals. I think that was a big deal. If you remember, in 2007, we did not make an NCAA regional. It was a good team but we didn't make an NCAA regional.

There were a lot of distractions that fall because there were a lot of people that were wanting our players and wanting our people to be at different things. Again, I think it took away from our preparation in that fall before the '07 season.

I think one of the biggest years in Coastal was -- a couple -- '01 was the first team that got us to a regional. And then we ended up winning five straight conference championships, five straight tournament championships. In '05 was the first team to be the No. 1 seed of a regional. But they put us on the road to Arizona State.

'06, we were 30-27. And it was a great wake-up call. It was humbling. And to Gillie's credit, he was the leader at that time, we all rallied around each other. We didn't point fingers, and we realized that we needed to be humbled. We needed to get back to the basics.

'07 was our first host. '08 we hosted again and it was our first regional championship. So those years were pretty critical.

Then obviously 2010 was one of the best teams we ever had. We were the No. 4 national seed, won the regional, lost in the super regional, two one-run games to the eventual national champion. And then in 2016 finally obviously broke through, got us to Omaha and won it.



Q. The guys used the phrase "Coastal baseball" a couple of times what does that mean to you, whether that be attitude or approach? And anything you've identified that LSU does particularly well?

KEVIN SCHNALL: Coastal baseball, you have to have a certain type of energy level to play at Coastal Carolina. If you like baseball, Coastal's not the program for you. Two pillars of Coastal Carolina are the words "relentless" and "selfless." And "relentless" is basically doing everything to the best of your ability every single day. And "selfless" is having an others-centered mindset versus a self-centered mindset. And that is nonnegotiable in our program.

Regarding LSU, it's pretty simple. They've got power on both sides of the ball. They have over 100 home runs. They've got over 700 strikeouts. That combination is very dangerous.

Q. Wanted to get your thoughts on everyone outside of the state of Louisiana pulling for Coastal Carolina this weekend. How cool is that? Is that something you don't even worry about?

KEVIN SCHNALL: I'll start by, the Chanticleer Athletic Foundation, it's a great opportunity to give back and donate and all the support matters.

Q. Coming full circle as a player, as a coach, as an assistant coach and now a head coach here, just talk about what it means to you to see this program over the last couple of decades, whenever you were a player to now to see the success.

KEVIN SCHNALL: It all started with a chance. Coach Gilmore gave me a chance back in 1997 to play Division I baseball at Coastal Carolina. And then in 2000, he gave me a chance to be a coach on his staff.

If it wasn't for those chances, I'm not sure where I'm at today. And just to see, not only Coastal baseball but Coastal Carolina University grow into what it is today is really special.

Q. You kind of touched on it there, Coach, but this is your alma mater. How much does it mean to you -- you've been here with this team before in different roles -- but how much does it mean to you or have you given yourself a chance to think about, this is your school, and you've got them in this position this weekend in the College World Series?

KEVIN SCHNALL: I love Coastal. I love Coastal with all my heart. I have had opportunities for me. It was never about being a head coach. It was about being the head

coach at Coastal Carolina. I waited 24 years for this opportunity, and, like I said, when I started, I fill this seat with gratitude. There's not a day that goes by that I take this opportunity for granted. It's an opportunity of a lifetime. It's the honor of a lifetime.

To be on this stage, on this platform, with this program, it's really special.

Q. You've talked throughout the week how this hasn't been a Cinderella story. What would a second national title this weekend mean to this program?

KEVIN SCHNALL: That would be two national championships in nine years. That would put Coastal Carolina baseball on a different planet. That would put Coastal Carolina University in a really good position, and again that's really special.

But it's not about winning a national championship at this point; it's about winning today's practice, and that's what's really important, at 12:00 we have to win the next hour and a half. We've got to have a great session today, and then we've got to win tomorrow's BP. And then it's about just winning pitches, not worrying about outs, winning pitches. If you win pitches, you'll start getting outs. And before you know it, you hold that up.

Q. Obviously you've been a part of lengthy win streaks before, I'm sure. You talk about the process. Obviously you don't plan on losing. What would your process be if you all were to lose a game bouncing back in the series again this weekend?

KEVIN SCHNALL: The staff would yell at the players a lot.

We've won 26 straight. If we lost, how would we react? How would we respond? The reality is we've got to dissect what we did wrong and try to rectify it for the next day.

That's what we've done a great job of this year is we've dove into things that we could correct and our players are able to adapt and adjust very quickly.

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