

2025 Men's College World Series

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Anthony Eyanson

Jake Brown

Press Conference



all youth baseball players in the state on a stage like this, and how important is it for you in this moment?

JAKE BROWN: It's awesome. It's something I've dreamed for my entire life, as I know other Louisiana guys on the team have. This is everything that you've worked for coming up.

In Louisiana your dream is to play baseball for LSU. And what goes with that is being able to represent it at the highest level of college baseball, which this program has been able to do year in and year out. And really just super thankful for the opportunity I've been gifted with and looking to make the most out of it.

Q. Jake, when you're not starting, it's almost inevitable that sometime you're going to pinch-hit. How do you stay ready for that?

JAKE BROWN: I think the coaching staff does a really good job of having me prepared and letting me know kind of when my opportunity will come. So just being able to stay focused, stay ready during the game, knowing that the second my name's called upon it will be an opportunity for me to help the team win. Just taking it one pitch at a time, being where my feet are and just staying prepared.

Q. Coastal's coach was in here talking about microscopic focus and attention to detail. When he says those things, I think immediately of your coach, right? Could you speak to the amount of preparation that Jay and the staff provide you guys? Any details that you would like to share about, how it's helped you prepare for a game, and how it might impact, obviously, the biggest games in your life coming up?

ANTHONY EYANSON: I think Coach Johnson is really good at simplifying a task for our team. Just helping us understand that, no matter the situation, you're just playing the game, and the game's always going to be the same. So I think that he does a really good job preparing us.

JAKE BROWN: Yeah, I would agree with that. I mean, in our meetings before the games, there's a very clear set of

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by LSU head coach Jay Johnson and student-athletes Jake Brown and Anthony Eyanson.

JAY JOHNSON: Awesome to be here. It's, in my opinion, it's one of the best days on the college baseball calendar with 307 teams in Division I. To be one of the last two playing and practicing today at Charles Schwab Field is a great honor and testament to the hard work and execution of our team.

I've documented it a lot. I would coach this team forever, and obviously the talent on it is exceptional. Just like with these two guys here, Anthony and Jake, across the roster.

But great people. Completely bought into the mission of the team. And tremendous self-discipline, tremendous mental strength to go along with that talent. And very worthy of playing in the championship series. And very excited about the next couple of days.

Looking forward to playing a great opponent in Coastal Carolina and Coach Schnall. I've known him for a very long time. Consider him a friend. And obviously have had long-term respect for a program that's been one of the best in college baseball over the last couple of decades.

So wouldn't want to have it any other way and very thankful for the team and the efforts that they put forward to put us in this position and looking forward to a great championship series.

Q. Jake, as a young man from the state of Louisiana, growing up as an LSU fan, growing up in the culture and going to, games how important is it for you to represent not only LSU but the state of Louisiana and



instructions on what every guy needs to do to be able to be his best to help the team win at any given moment. Everything is very straightforward for us.

We came here to play baseball. We're not really scholars. So he does a great job of laying it out for us and making us go out there executing as simple as it can be. So super thankful for that. (Laughter).

Q. Going back throughout some championship teams here in the College World Series in Omaha, they learn through adversity throughout the year. You guys started the season 22-1 and your last 13 games you're 11-2. SEC play was where you could have faced the biggest competition, the most adversity. What have you guys learned about, one, position-lay group, and, two, the pitching staff?

JAKE BROWN: I would say that this is a really battle-tested team. We played in just about every type of baseball game from blowing people out to getting beat to coming back in games, to winning just by one run.

I mean, it's a team that's really seen it all. I think it speaks to the toughness of our team.

Pitching staff is always ready to hand the ball off to the next guy. That guy always is ready to come in and do his job.

I think for the position players, it's just like we have 15 guys that can affect a game at any moment. And it's just being ready to come in, do it one pitch at a time.

There's no lead that we can't come back from, and I think we've known that, which is, I mean, with two outs the other night, we're down by two runs, and we're able to put together some tough at-bats to come back right there.

It's a team that's seen it all and is prepared to do anything. I think that's going to help us in the long run.

Q. Anthony, Jacob Morrison was in here saying he's willing to pitch 150 pitches if he has to in his start. I'm sure you feel similarly. Your situation, you might start and have a long outing, and you might be asked to come in get some key outs in relief. How do you approach that in terms of preparation and being able to do whatever is asked at this crucial, in such a crucial series?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Yeah, I think that just comes with me week in and week out being prepared for anything. And I think Coach Yeskie and Coach Johnson do a really good job preparing our whole pitching staff to be able to

pitch whenever they have to, just be in the best position to help the team win.

I'm fine with pitching whenever, pitching, closing games, starting games. I think just up to this point in the season I've been prepared for it.

Q. Jake, you were on the team last year, Coach said maybe what you lacked last season was a little bit of toughness, and that's one of the reason why you all have been more successful this year. It's one thing to talk about having that, but what's the process of adding that to this year's team and how do you all exemplify that?

JAKE BROWN: I think it all goes to having the right guys on the bus. We have a locker room full of guys that show up every day super excited to compete with people that are not just their teammates but best friends.

We have a super close-knit group of guys that nobody wants to stop playing with each other. We want to have this team for as long as we can. And part of that goes with just not giving in.

So, it's a lot of guys knowing they're competing for each other. One common goal. We're going to try to keep this team for as long as we can. So no reason to lay down now.

Q. Jake, Coach Johnson talks a lot about being one-run ready. What does that look like for you guys stepping into the box? And especially for you, when you're in a pinch-hit role a lot of the time, what does that preparation look like throughout a game and before a game?

JAKE BROWN: Like I said, it's pretty laid out of what every guy needs to do to help the team win. It's just really being focused, being where your feet are and ultimately not trying to do too much.

One-run games are normally won via a lot of group effort. People passing the stick to the next guy and doing whatever it takes to come out on top right there.

And that showed the other night. Guys weren't trying to do too much. We were hitting the ball low and hard. Able to have a couple of fortunate plays go our way and swing at the end.

Jared knew he didn't have to hit a home run to win the game right there. So he just was able to stay where his feet are, hit the ball low and hard. And that's what got it done for us that night.



Q. Jake, since the postseason, Coach Johnson has talked about how things ended in the Chapel Hill regional. Have you used that as a motivation throughout this postseason?

JAKE BROWN: A little bit yes and no. I took a lot of pride in kind of flushing that moment to ultimately be prepared to be the best player I could be this year.

So in a way, yeah. Obviously I want to go out and compete and win a national championship. I don't think that it has so much to do with last year because, the type of player that I am, I like to play pretty confidently. I know that I'm able to trust the work that I put in and trust my preparation, and trust coaching staff and the guys around me. It's a lot of focus on this year. That's been the motto all year.

Q. Anthony, obviously last outing against UCLA, don't start the best. Give up those three runs. You never really got the chance to settle in. This Coastal team preaches scoring first. It's one of their big things that they just talked about. What's your mindset to stop that?

ANTHONY EYANSON: To not let them score in the first. That's all it is.

Q. Jake, when you were growing up, what do you remember most about growing up as an LSU fan and wanting to play there?

JAKE BROWN: I remember being a little kid that would come to the games and watch the games on TV. And those guys were like superheroes to me growing up. It's been a real pleasure of mine, something I'm super thankful for, something that I'm able to be that person nowadays.

I enjoy giving back to the people that are just like me. That's why, if you look out I'm tossing the ball to the stands to a little kid because I was in those shoes before and I know what it's like to be a little kid that's a fan of LSU Tigers.

Q. There's an incredible amount of spotlight when you play at LSU and all your successes are magnified, but so are failures. How do you navigate that, knowing, Jake, like you said, there's a good and bad to it? And, Anthony, how new was it for you when you got to LSU, and how have you dealt with it?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Obviously big crowd difference for me coming from UC San Diego to here. I honestly didn't really think about it too much, just knowing if I play a full

season in front of fans they're going to see me play good and bad. Just kind of took that as how it is. Just disregard it and just play my game.

JAKE BROWN: I would say nobody dreams about playing in an empty ballpark. When you're a kid, when you're taking swings in the backyard, when you're doing all this stuff, you're dreaming about playing in the biggest spotlight.

That's what LSU is. If you want the chance to come and play the closest thing to professional baseball at a college level, this is where you come.

Q. Anthony, you mentioned how Nate Yeskie does a very good job laying out a game plan for you, the pitchers. What does it look like? Does he meet with you guys individually in terms of, you're going to start today or you're probably going to come out of the bullpen today? How does he simplify things exactly?

ANTHONY EYANSON: It will be via conversation, just tell him how I'm feeling. Just he'll kind of talk to Coach Johnson about what they're thinking about and expecting out of us pitchers. I'll just keep relaying how I feel and things like that.

Q. Jake, as you mentioned, life-long LSU fan. What do you remember about 2016 and that Coastal Carolina super?

JAKE BROWN: A little bit of heart break. That was a great team a team I think could have made a good run in the championship. Obviously things didn't go our way that time. Looking forward to turning it around and making something good happen for us this time.

Q. I assume you guys play teams at times who have a chip on their shoulder because you're LSU. Coastal kind of made it clear they're not here to compliment LSU and the history; they're here to beat you. How do you counter that? Is it just LSU baseball as it always is?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Yeah, I mean, it's the other team. I think they're here to beat us, just like we're here to beat them. So I think if we execute and play our game, we'll have good results.

JAKE BROWN: Yeah, kind of the same thing. I mean, we've trained all year. We've been together since August for this. This isn't something that caught us by surprise. We knew we were meant to be here.

And it's everything that we've done, everything we've set

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

forth, all the hard work, all the preparation has brought us to this moment. And we're ready to go out there and compete and bring home number eight.

Q. Can you talk about your relationship with head coach Kevin Schnall? And, secondly, just the '16 heartbreak against Coastal Carolina when you were coaching with Arizona, please?

JAY JOHNSON: For sure. I met Kevin a long time ago. Something that I learned early on was study the people that are the best at what they do -- Skip Bertman and Augie Garrido and Gary Gilmore.

I was very impressed with their program. I was at a mid-major at the University of San Diego as the associate head coach for eight years. They were kind of one that we were kind of modeling and emulating on the West Coast. And, so, paying attention to what they were doing.

And then going out, recruiting and trying to make us a national program and going after the best players, I ran into Kevin on the recruiting front. And just having good baseball conversations.

And then what I've always admired about him is the pride he's taken in his job as a recruiting coordinator and now as the head coach. So ton of respect there.

As far as 2016, unique situation for us. I went to Arizona. I didn't have one player that had ever played in the NCAA tournament before. And we were picked 10th out of 11 in the Pac-12.

In the fall we were really grinding to kind of see what we were going to be. It wasn't like a smooth deal.

And then we came back in January. And there was about five pitchers that you started to look at and go, we're pretty good -- and a position-player group that, part of the reason I accepted that job was because I thought there were players that could play better than they had to that point in their career.

We got the ball rolling a little bit. I think we opened at Rice and they were ranked in the top 10 and we won two out of three, got some good wins on the board, built some confidence.

In the postseason, played really well. Won a regional at Louisiana- Lafayette, a super regional at Mississippi State. Got here, and if I remember correctly we both lost the second game and both had to fight our way back through the losers' bracket.

And then won a 3-0 game and lost two one-run games. And this is my spot in the world is Omaha. This is what I dream about.

And the first time being here I remember being very thankful to play eight games.

And in the moment it was really tough. It's no different than how I feel about this team or the '23 team or when we came here in '21 with Arizona. They deserve to be here. And you want them to experience the full thing. We were one base hit away.

And it took a couple of years to get past that. But it doesn't change how I feel about Cody Ramer or Bobby Dalbec, JJ Matijevic, Cameron Ming. I heard from all those guys in the last two days about our win the other night. So that's how close that was. It really reminds me of this team actually.

I think what I do remember about all of that is it's really helped me the next three times that we've been here in terms of knowing how to prepare for this. And that was kind of my main takeaway from it.

Q. With both of them being left-handers, how do you handle that right-field platoon, so to speak? How do you make the decision, I guess?

JAY JOHNSON: I've never even really looked at it as a platoon, nor have I ever looked at Josh or Jake as not a full-time starter. We have a national championship in 2023 largely because of Josh Pearson, both defensively and offensively. There's nothing that he has not seen over the course of a four-year college baseball career.

If you ask me -- I don't mean this from a statistical value -- but who's had the most complete four-year career of the last four years of college baseball in terms of national championship, Omaha experience, regional, super regional, high level throughout the season? Josh Pearson would definitely be on that list.

And Jake, in my opinion, is one of the best players on our team and provides a lot and is one of the main reasons we are here in this position.

So, it's literally looking at it game by game. We've been very fortunate with our outfield situation. Chris Stanfield has been a tremendous center fielder. Derek Curiel has to be on a very short list of one of the best freshmen in the country.

To have four -- I would throw Ashton Larson into that too -- five guys that you can run out there, not many programs



have that.

We look at it game by game and try to put them all in positions to be successful. And I think we've done a good job of that this year.

Q. What aspect or aspects of your team, your program, your season do you believe may give you an advantage in this series if there is an advantage to be had?

JAY JOHNSON: I think if you're at this point in the NCAA tournament, you've been battle-tested. I think that's just the way that it is.

I think for our team, I don't believe there's anything we have not seen. What I mean by that is high-level pitching, high-level bullpen, high-level defense, offenses with speed, power, hitting skills, know how to play the game, move the offense.

I think like we're very prepared. And we'll just leave it at that. I said it earlier in the week -- one of my attitudes about all of this is everything is training for something. I feel like we're well-trained, well-prepared for, in my opinion, probably the best team that we've played this year in Coastal.

Q. After the Arkansas game, you mentioned that there was nobody in the city of Omaha that was happier than you that you were getting, one, two days off, and, two, that you weren't playing on Thursday. I would assume over the two days you've looked at Coastal. What do you assume are their strengths that you're preparing for? And Coach Schnall revealed their Game 1 starter. Are you willing to do the same?

JAY JOHNSON: I didn't hear that officially but I trust you. When I know, everybody else will know.

Q. Would you like to tell us who he is?

JAY JOHNSON: No, I would not at this point in time. (Laughter).

What was the question before that?

Q. What have you learned through scouting Coastal?

JAY JOHNSON: A lot. Nothing really of a surprise. I love college baseball. So there's Tuesday or Wednesday night game they were playing against Clemson. I was at home. We weren't playing, so maybe it was a Wednesday night. And I watched them play Clemson.

So the strengths are undeniable. Great starting rotation. Use their bullpen really well. Offensively, clear identity. I think that's really important. Something we try to do as well is play to the identity of your team.

They're excellent at getting a lead-off man on base. They use the bunting game about as good as anybody that does in college baseball. Again, that's a '20 year thing; that's not a 2025-team thing. They play really good defense. They don't beat themselves.

You have to win the game. I said this very similarly when we played UCLA the other day: You have to win the game because they're very fundamentally sound and they're going to play the right way. So you have to execute your game plan and execute your fundamentals to earn the win against them.

Q. With all the weather delays, issues this year, how much have you embraced your inner meteorologist; and to that end, the weather forecast for Saturday and Sunday was very hot with the wind potentially howling in from right or from center, maybe blowing out a little bit to left. You prepare for a lot of different things, how much does the weather or potential weather factor into your preparation?

JAY JOHNSON: I didn't hear you say anything about lightning, right? (Laughter) then I'm good with everything else.

It's just part of the deal. We talked about it after the Monday/Tuesday game with UCLA. It's like if I could control the weather, I wouldn't be a college baseball coach; I'd probably be doing something else.

But it's just part of the deal. I'm really thankful -- see Randy here, the staff, how they handle that, the professionalism. A lot of smart people working on it to keep the integrity of the games and the integrity of the tournament.

From a coach's chair, when you're competing for a championship, that's really important. So thank you for that and great job.

As far as the conditions, playing all eight games here in 2023, we had wind blowing straight in for the majority of the tournament, and then we had the wind blowing out that one game against Florida, and it's shifted.

It's just something that you kind of expect this time of year, and the conditions change. As far as the heat, just want the players to be ready for that and we've dealt with it in the postseason. Super regional game one against West



Virginia is no question the hottest baseball game I've ever been a part of.

I just stood on the top steps, gave signs, walked out, made a couple of pitching changes, and Saturday night I was, like, man, that was something else. I don't know how Luis Hernandez or Steven Milam or Kade Anderson getting through seven innings in that game were doing it.

Luckily, we had a lot thrown at us keeping us prepared and try to stay out ahead of it and use all things to our advantage.

Q. It seems like outside of the state of Louisiana, America's rooting interest is with Coastal. Do you guys like that?

JAY JOHNSON: I wouldn't even know how to gauge that. They're a great program for a long time. LSU is a great program for a long time. Two worthy opponents in the College World Series. It will make for excellent baseball. Fortunately, being in this deal three times, you're not playing a team that doesn't care about and invest in baseball in the championship series, or really in the College World Series. So I think it's awesome.

Q. A lot of people this weekend will focus on the differences between an LSU and a Coastal, a Sunbelt versus an SEC. What would you tell those folks that there's maybe more similarities between the programs than they realize?

JAY JOHNSON: I think there's a lot of similarities. I would say recruiting at an elite level, that might mean different things. I think I have a unique perspective on this. I haven't always been at LSU, or even Arizona; it was Point Loma Nazarene, University of San Diego, University of Nevada. I know what it's like to try to build one of those. When you knock off that Power Five how that lifts you in the regular season, not only the postseason, and the attitude that you have to carry to be that and to do that. I have great respect for that.

But this is about execution and it's about baseball, and it's about pitchers throwing strikes, your defense handling the ball, your offense stringing quality at-bats together. When I look at their team, I see a lot of our team.

Q. Something you've praised a lot about this team this season is their maturity and their mental strength. Exactly how big was that pushing through the Arkansas game and how crucial will that be this weekend?

JAY JOHNSON: It was everything in that game and it will

be everything this weekend. The longer I do this, the older I get, it really simplifies of what you need to do to get here and to succeed here. And I think that was on full display.

And how the game transpired and the end of it, it kind of flooded me with, like, I can't believe we just did that. But at the same time, we've done it several times this year. And I'm just very impressed with our players' ability to focus on the task at hand, focus on execution, completely eliminate the external and focus on what's relevant. That's a core principle of our program is focusing on what's relevant, and these guys do a great job of that.

Q. After the regional, you mentioned that you had a big players meeting. The players spoke. I'm wondering, since that meeting, what was said that's been impactful and how has the team evolved since then and gone on this tear in the Supers and obviously here in Omaha?

JAY JOHNSON: I think, again, whether it's Omaha, super regional, regional, we don't attach anything to it. We try to be awesome at our process of winning. And part of that is feedback.

There's a really good book called "legacy" about the All Blacks rugby team. They've never lost. And there's a core principle in there about team and player meetings and then presenting feedback for improvement, and even as you're at the top of your game, adjusting and improving. That's just something that I try to bring to the program.

We did it the other night. This was unbelievable. I wasn't going to stop the celebration and go, like, okay, guys, now let's break the game down here. But when we got back to the hotel, we needed to do it. Chase Shores coming up and talking and Jacob Mayers coming up and Zac Cowan coming up and talking, that's part of our deal.

I actually don't even remember specifically which one you're talking about just because it's kind of common place with how we roll.

Q. I asked the players about handling the spotlight. Clearly you have a lot of eyes on your program, I guess. How have you instructed them or what tools have you used to help them navigate their successes and failures?

JAY JOHNSON: It's a really good question. It's honestly one of the reasons I took the job in the first place was to test myself, test what I believe in and spotlight/no spotlight.

The fundamentals of running winning an elite baseball program are exactly the same. Our opponent does it really



well. And we do it really, really well. And it's proven to work out the way that I thought it would. But I wanted to test it in an arena where it's only a blessing to have so many people care about what you're doing.

And that is what I will say about LSU is there's not another baseball program in the entire country where more people care about what you're doing.

I think it's an awesome honor for these players because their effort deserves people to care about what they're doing.

No different than our opponent. But I think it's something that makes it special. But the challenge -- not the challenge, the coaching point is of, regardless if one person is watching or the eyes of the world are on you, execution is execution. And toughness is your ability to focus on what you need to do to execute your plan regardless of circumstances.

Q. After the Little Rock loss, it felt like you guys found a formula with the lineup for lefties and for righties, that sort of has really helped, worked out for you guys up to this point. What did you sort of learn in that game that sort of informed the sort of formulas for lefties and righties up to now?

JAY JOHNSON: I don't know that it has to do with left or right so much. I had, this year, when we were 31-3 or 22-1, somebody said, and caught a really good role of what the formula of winning was for this team early in the season. Then you're going to get tested with the schedule that we play and exposed, which in my opinion is a good thing. I mentioned that everything is training for something and being built for postseason play.

All of that was kind of thrown into a bucket to move us closer to our best team. And you guys have heard me say for four years, we treat every game like a playoff game, because forget Omaha, being in the NCAA tournament is not a birthright; you have to win games.

So I think we were just continually using the season as it came along to find out what works best, and just even to the other night, it was a grind to get to the starting lineup, knowing what Arkansas was going to do, what they had available in the bullpen, and it literally probably took until like 3:00 in the afternoon.

So it doesn't have as much to do with how you set it as how the players execute. We have them all in a really good space to execute at a high level, and they have talent and they have ability, and you can win against some of the best teams in the country.

As far as that game, I don't remember anything specifically that kind of catapulted us forward.

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