

2025 Men's College World Series

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Kade Anderson

Steven Milam

Postgame Press Conference



LSU - 1, Coastal Carolina - 0

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by LSU head coach Jay Johnson and student-athletes Kade Anderson and Steven Milam.

JAY JOHNSON: Great performance tonight by our team, especially Kade. Special performance. Not taking it for granted; that's what we've seen all year. He's the best pitcher in the country. And did it again tonight.

That's been on the regular, every Game 1 of the entire season. So I'm glad he did that tonight, so everybody got to see what we've seen and known for an entire season.

Other things I thought were great, in the first inning, Derek Curiel, 0-2, draws the walk. Ethan Frey moves the ball against a tough pitcher. Steven gets down to two strikes and hits a ball hard and low through the middle of the field, that he's better at that than everybody else in the country. That's all he needed.

Couple other things I'd like to point out is Luis Hernandez behind the plate tonight was spectacular. I mean, this guy was striking out a lot of guys, and some of them were on chase pitches -- the block, the recovery, the tag or the throw down to first base to not let any weird plays kind of happen.

And then Michael Braswell's defense at third base was a difference maker in the game tonight.

Good all around effort by our team. We'll get ready to go for tomorrow.

Q. Steven, you were 2-for-3 with a walk off Flukey and

he had a really great game as well as Kade did. What did you see from him that made you so effective tonight?

STEVEN MILAM: He made a couple of mistakes to me in my at-bats. First at-bat, he got three heaters and I was to get one down and put a swing at it.

Second at-bat, he hung three spinners and I was able to put another good swing on it.

He walked me the last at-bat. I just saw him well. Just stuck to my plan and was able to execute it.

Q. Top of the third inning felt like a huge frame tonight. First two runners get on base, they lay down a bunt. You make the play, get the out at third. How much time did you guys have to be practice PFPs it the two off days in this final series? PFPs are pretty routine at this point, right?

KADE ANDERSON: I think we've practiced over 10,000 PFPs in our season. We had the plan for what Coastal is all about and just to go execute and field your position. Simple as that.

Q. Kade, talk about pitching in the heat tonight. And how badly did you want to finish this game off tonight?

KADE ANDERSON: Yeah, I think that's the real benefit in playing in Louisiana. Growing up there, this was honestly not nearly as bad as it was in the super regional. And it wasn't even comparable, honestly.

And just like Coach Johnson does, he prepares you for every element. Preparation is a key to our success and it really showed today.

Q. Kade, how many times in your life do you think you were throwing in a game or practice saying, this is to win the College World Series, this is to win a game for LSU like this? I mean, how many times did you live moment before you got the complete game?



KADE ANDERSON: Probably every night. And really just putting my team in the situation to win. I mean, we got a loaded bullpen now. That necessarily wasn't to end the College World Series. We've got one more that we're preparing for. We'll go back to the hotel and start preparing for that one as well.

Q. Kade, that was the most walks you had this year and you hit a couple of guys. Both out of character. How were you able to gather yourself and pitch out of trouble so often?

KADE ANDERSON: Yeah, just really focusing on the next pitch. It wasn't pretty, but got the job done. Just like I said, just putting the team in a situation to win.

Sometimes the staff we have is just -- all you need is one run sometimes. And Coach Johnson prepares us to be one-run ready.

Q. Steven, that first inning, Coach kind of mentioned it, Derek drawing that walk. What does that do for you having a hitter ahead of you like that who can draw so many, especially in that circumstance? And talk me through your at-bat, down 2-0, swung and missed those first couple and then lined one up the middle.

STEVEN MILAM: Derek getting on base puts a lot of pressure on the defense. My first two fastballs I swung at, I feel I got out of my plan. Got back to my focal point and was able to put a good swing on it and shorten up.

It happened to be the difference maker. I was just trying to get up there, pass it to the next guy and be a tough out.

Q. I know you won the game, but I'll ask you about the call on Dickinson when he was called out. Didn't look like you got to ask a question much less argue. Can you tell us what that interaction was like?

JAY JOHNSON: As far as -- after you're not supposed to go out there after a review. So the umpire was correct. I know that. I knew that. I just wanted clarification for -- the ball was clearly in the batter's box. I'm not sure what he was supposed to do.

It's a tough rule where you're rewarding the pitcher for throwing a ball in that case. I thought he did make an attempt to roll. But at that point my team needs me to stay poised and focused and calm and, as they said, get to the next pitch.

That was that. So you're not allowed to after review you're not allowed to go back out to the umpire.

Q. Talk to me about what you saw from Kade Anderson throughout the game and he kept getting out of jams and leaving Coastal runners stranded on base. In so many ways, the defense helping him out along the way and the thought process of sending him back out there for the ninth?

JAY JOHNSON: I think as far as the pitching with traffic, I think I heard Coach Savage say it earlier this week, it's the College World Series. You're going to pitch with runners on base. It's the best teams in the country, and that's one of the best teams in the country.

They do a great job of finding their way on base. And they did a few times tonight.

He told me in the third inning, I just went down to say a little something to him, and he's, like, I'll settle in. And I was, like, nobody knows that better than me.

And he had an outing very similar to this. And I saw some commonalities in that. When we were at Oklahoma, we had a 10-pitch inning in the seventh and then two quick outs, really quick outs, maybe within three or four pitches in the eighth.

I felt like they weren't seeing him, they weren't picking him up. I know the human being. That's who you want on the mound in the ninth.

Q. It's very likely that was Kade Anderson's last outing, at least starting the game for LSU. Can you talk about his impact on the program? And also tonight, coming into this game, sub-two walks or hit-by-pitches per inning. He had seven tonight, and yet he throws 130 pitches and a complete game.

JAY JOHNSON: I think that was a lot. I'll try to go back and sort it out.

He's the best pitcher in college baseball. I mean, we had the best pitcher on the planet two years ago in a similar situation. I felt like Kade's had a very similar season to that.

And that's how you get here. I'm really proud of him. And I think the commonality between the two is the person, the character, the toughness, the team-first attitude.

And you're probably right. I mean, his next pitch should be for someplace in the Washington Nationals organization. It's not close.

And they usually draft really well. And he's the best player in the country. There's nobody closer to the Major

Leagues than that right now.

But I don't think you can quantify it -- Paul Skenes, Joe Burrow, that type of deal.

Q. I don't know what effect it ended up happening, but this afternoon, the way that wind was roaring, did it change your approach to the game or what you told your hitters and outfielders or anything? Were you concerned about it?

JAY JOHNSON: For sure. I wouldn't say concerned. I would say aware. I think when we showed up for BP, it was obviously going to play in the game. It was odd. It switched directions during batting practice. I don't know if you call it a swirling wind.

I was a PE major. And so I leave it to the staff to tell me -- they start talking about northeast/southwest, I have no idea what they're talking about. So I just go out to left, out to right, in from all directions. We just need to know what the deal is.

And you had to pay attention tonight because it actually switched in about the third inning. And it definitely impacted the game. And, again, it's just something you can't control. And just try to be alert for it.

I thought Derek made two really nice plays. They were in the same inning. I've seen a lot of plays get muffed in left field here because of the sun, both for and against my teams. And then the one running back, I think, that Thorndyke hit on the screws, really good plays.

So it's just part of the deal. Sounds like it's going to be part of the deal tomorrow as well.

Q. A little bit trip through the history books here. In 2023 I believe you mentioned the importance of opening game one, how you felt it was mandatory for your team to win it all that year.

Looking back at 2016, Coach Schnall just mentioned the shutout in game one. Walk us through the dynamic of the importance of winning game one, as you just did, but also remaining cautious like in 2016.

JAY JOHNSON: I think you could look at any two out of three, like any super regional, and they're not over until you win two. And there's not anybody that doesn't really understand that, at least in our locker room.

We have a different way that we look at things. Caution is not really a word that this group would really use.

Focus, determined, task at hand, execution, preparation, it's a little more where we're at with that.

Q. You talked about building your roster to be able to win any kind of game. What's it like winning a 1-0 game? It's never happened for LSU here. Just what's that emotion like?

JAY JOHNSON: There's not a lot of emotion. Like, I just don't think that helps you when you're in battle, both as a player and as a coach or decision-maker. You're just trying to stay focused on what your team needs.

Flukey, hats off to him. I heard really good things about him, obviously prepared for him over the last couple of days, and he was better than the reputation and the reputation was really good.

It's hard to imagine that he's probably not a first-round pick next year. We've seen a lot of good arms this year. He's right there at the top.

I thought our guys battled. Anytime we had a chance for momentum, it was either the next at-bat just didn't go the way we needed it to go to capitalize and create some space in the game.

And thankfully we had the best pitcher in the world going tonight and played great defense behind him.

Q. You just talked about the defense. I'd like to kind of talk about Michael Braswell and just his spectacular defensive abilities, and he's been struggling at the plate, but there's no shortness of him succeeding on the field.

JAY JOHNSON: There's a lot of ways to impact your team's ability to win the game other than just hitting. I think when you hand out these box scores, it has to do with offense mostly in the first, and that's what grabs the attention. But you're playing one of the best teams in the country. They don't give you a whole lot. You have to win the game.

Like I said, if you give them an inch, they'll take a mile. His defense stopped some potential momentum for them tonight. And I'm glad you brought that up. It's one of the first things I brought up with the team was the two-strike at-bats in the first inning; Luis Hernandez's catching; the outfield play between Derek, Stanfield and Jake Brown; and then obviously Michael, who had a huge impact on the game tonight.

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