

2026 Men's College World Series

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Troy Trojans

Coach Skylar Meade

Jabe Boroff

Blake Cavill

Jimmy Janicki

Press Conference



BLAKE CAVILL: You know, speaking of that, why wouldn't you want to play those teams? You want to play the best of the best. You want to compete against the best of the best. And we've been doing that since -- when was our first game? -- February 16th, from the get-go. Mercer, who was a great team, all the way to the last game of the season against Southern Miss, you know, from the get-go. That's how we like to play, and it actually worked out in our favor. So it was good.

JIMMY JANICKI: Yeah, I mean it's an awesome way to compete with everybody. I mean, a bunch of good competition. It definitely set us up, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Troy coach Skylar Meade and student-athletes Jabe Boroff, Blake Cavill and Jimmy Janicki.

SKYLAR MEADE: This is certainly a great welcome to the great city of Omaha that we have had over the last nearly 24 hours. And it would be an understatement, most certainly, to say we are thrilled and excited to be here. Certainly not satisfied, which I'm sure you'll learn as you guys ask questions in this, but it's been an awesome ride.

We've had heck of a journey since August 11th. That was our first team meeting, and going through all the ups and downs. And while many times that sounds to be a bit cliché, if you followed our season, or you go schedule diving or you just follow the Trojans, you would realize nobody's probably had more of this, but in the end we needed to be our best in May.

Everything we did was strategic in nature. If we were our best in May, then you earn the right for June. And thankfully we're earning the right to be able to play out here late into June.

Q. You guys played one of the most difficult schedules in college baseball, coming from the Sunbelt, playing some difficult season games and nonconference, really tough. Did that set you guys up for the success you guys had late in the season?

JABE BOROFF: Definitely does. The tough schedule definitely prepared us, and it did well for us because we know that we're capable in those high-pressure situations. And it proved to be good for us in the postseason.

Q. What's it like to play for Coach Meade?

JABE BOROFF: It's awesome. I don't know if you all have heard him talk, but he has more conviction than anybody in the room. He speaks his mind, and he always is truthful about what he thinks. And I think it's really good to play for him. He's honest with you and he believes in you. It's awesome.

BLAKE CAVILL: He's one of the best communicators in the game. He leads from the front, leads all the time. But I saw a stat the other day. He was like 14.2 defensive runs saved was the top, but I think Skylar's on about 74 this year the way he's running around out there all game. He deserves his crown.

JIMMY JANICKI: No doubt. I mean, just like Blake said, great leader, if not the best coach I've ever had. There's nobody else I'd want to go war with than Coach Meade.

SKYLAR MEADE: I'm going to keep them in the lineup because of all the nice comments.

Q. Jimmy, with the changing of college athletics, you know, there was a thought at one time with NIL and rev share and so forth that access to the College World Series would really be limited to the Power 4 schools, and obviously the SEC still dominates with all those national titles and so forth, but it does seem like there's some access for others as well and that hasn't



necessarily come to fruition, that line of thought. Why do you think that is in baseball that this is able to happen?

JIMMY JANICKI: I mean, I think it all starts at the top. I mean, Coach Meade recruits great players. We are great players, and we perform.

Q. Gainesville regional, you dropped the first game to Miami. Just talk about how you guys handled the adversity coming out of the losers' bracket and taking down a Florida team twice, and then hosting a super regional against Little Rock last week.

JABE BOROFF: Like Coach said, we were riding a wave up and down. We had to play a lot of games with our backs against the wall. And we played amazing. That's when we play our best baseball, in high-pressure situations and with our backs against the wall.

I think that us dropping that game really just lit a fire under us, and all we want to do is keep on pushing.

BLAKE CAVILL: Yeah, you know, you're in Florida, you're in Gainesville. The excitement is already there. The rain delays, everything, there's no team in the country that's used to it than us. I'm going to be honest, I think we actually play better after a rain delay. Doesn't make much sense, but we've had that many this year, doubleheaders, everything.

It's our brand of baseball. Gritty, tough. Four-hour delays in between after the second inning, it doesn't bother us. We just want to go out there and play with each other, and we'll play hard no matter what.

JIMMY JANICKI: I feel like it was kind of a wake-up call. Obviously we didn't come out playing our best ball. But, I mean, those next games, I think we did play our best ball, and it was awesome to see.

Q. Jabe, I guess the folk hero of Troy, the month of May you've had has taken on a whole new level. I went back and watched a little bit of film. So the South Alabama series, Game 3, did you switch your bat? That's part one. And part two, can you tell us, just what has led you to the type of success and the run you've had the last three or four weeks? Is it a newfound confidence? Is it a little bit more comfortability in the lineup, a little more opportunity for you there?

JABE BOROFF: Yeah, so I definitely did switch bats. But oddly enough, they're actually the same bat, but it's just a different paint. Exact same thing. You get a little

superstitious sometimes, and you're like -- I went to the managers, and I was like, My bat has no hits in it. I just went 0-for-3. I need a bat with some hits in it.

They went and got me a new bat. And it all just started from there. But yeah, just being in the box, just being confident, just being loose, not overthinking and not stressing out, I think, is the biggest thing for me, yeah.

Q. The week you guys at Troy were playing a conference tournament in Montgomery, Mother Nature was very unkind to Alabama, and between you and the SEC, there must have been about 24 hours of rain delay. How did that get you ready going through that gauntlet and having to grind through all that? And then you even had to split the tournament up. How did that get you ready to go to Florida? By then it's always just Gainesville compared to what you've been through.

JABE BOROFF: Well, like Cavill said, we were battling through that the whole year. You know, Texas State, we were there forever, we were there all night long. That happened a handful of times too. And I would say the weather in Gainesville was almost a cakewalk compared to what we had been through the rest of the year.

BLAKE CAVILL: We talk about battling the elements. At this point we love the elements. We want it to rain. We want it to be pouring. We want it to be muddy, dirty, gritty, sweaty. It truly doesn't bother us at this point in the season. We just want to go out there and get our nine innings in and have fun with each other.

JIMMY JANICKI: Yeah, I mean, as a team, I mean, we've been through literally everything. I mean, adversity. We've been through I think everything you could have been through. I mean, long days, long nights. And, I mean, after the Sunbelt tournament, I mean, it was insane. I think we could literally accomplish anything.

Q. Blake, obviously Australia is a bit of a developing baseball nation, but an Australian was taken first in the MLB draft after playing college baseball. You're here at the College World Series. What does this maybe say to kids growing up playing baseball in Australia about college baseball?

BLAKE CAVILL: Ever since Travis basically put Australia on the map again, it's incredible to have -- I think there's over 100 kids now across America in junior colleges, D-I, D-II, NAIA. There's one in Alabama, Johnny Lemm.

It's incredible having friends here, seeing them all around the world, all playing everywhere. I play random



midweeks, and there's a random Australian kid I've never seen in my life from somewhere in the middle of the woods, and it's just enjoying seeing them. Little Rock had one as well. They had a pitcher. It's truly incredible seeing all these guys fulfill their dreams in America.

Q. I was wondering if the three players, how you feel, do you wear the Cinderella tag? Do you think you're going to be the crowd favorites? I mean, everybody follows baseball knows how good you are, but because you're not a Power 4, do you think you guys will be the crowd favorite, too?

JABE BOROFF: Yeah, the crowd loves the Cinderella story, but us in the locker room and as a staff, we don't really -- we don't love that term. We don't really consider ourselves that. We know what type of firepower and talent we have in this locker room. It's almost like a sour taste to hear a Cinderella story.

BLAKE CAVILL: Yeah, you know, people like to think of the underdog, but we've beat the teams here already. So it truly Cinderella this, Cinderella that. People will love us just the way we play out there on the field. You know, we're tough and we're gritty. We're hit by pitches. We have fun, we're out there hitting the balls hard. So even if we are the crowd favorite Cinderella story, they're going to love us for the way we play either way.

JIMMY JANICKI: I mean, kind of like what they said, we don't like the term "Cinderella story." I mean, we could beat anybody. And we have. We have beat big teams. Kind of just put our heads down and go to work.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. We talked last Tuesday before the super regional how the fire marshal might have to take you out in handcuffs, that the 6500 was going to be capped. It looked like you guys went maybe over that 6500. How was that support from the staff, and then did you meet up with the fire marshal and talk after the games?

SKYLAR MEADE: No, I did not end up in the clinic. So that was good for me. But the way I've described it, as people have asked, you have these beliefs and hopes of what it's going to look like, you know, hosting that super, and you speak all these things.

And then when it trumps it, it's pretty crazy, because that doesn't happen very much, right? When great things happen or great things you experience, there's, like, kind of a moment where you're like, all right, that's kind of what I thought it would be.

This one trumped it in terms of the way the community rallied our athletics department, and our fans, most importantly. And I know we did our job on the field. We played really good baseball to enhance the atmosphere. But 7,033 people showed up to a Troy baseball game. You could have robbed every store in that community. Nobody was doing anything.

And I think it's going to be a huge catapult to what this program can do down the road. I know we've got a lot of work to do here, and we're going to have to play, obviously, the best of the best, the other seven teams here, but what it does for Troy University and Troy baseball at large is pretty incredible.

Q. The same thing I was asking Jimmy about some teams that break through. Obviously what you guys did was very intentional in the way you built this thing, and with this in mind. But big-picture question, just about college baseball, why is this happening? I'm not talking specifically about you, but why isn't -- obviously the SEC does what it does and dominates with numbers. But they're not the only ones -- there's teams that are sneaking in, it seems like, every year, every other year that maybe aren't here very often or ever.

SKYLAR MEADE: I could give you obviously a long-winded answer to that. I do think that baseball is such a unique sport in terms of the way and how guys develop and when they develop. So sometimes you get guys who have not had success potentially, let's just utilize the SEC, there's five SEC teams here. So I certainly think the league's pretty incredible.

But there's guys, let's say, that maybe don't get the run or the opportunity and therefore they lack confidence, and then they come to a program such as Troy, or fill in the blank, that makes it here and then they thrive, but you realize they had SEC talent.

But then there's also the fact that if you're very intentional in your recruiting, you could get high school guys that maybe aren't at that apex that aren't, you know, being looked at by maybe the top 10, top 15 schools, but you know as a program that they're going to become dudes. Jimmy, for example.

But I think the other part is you have to be invested still. Now, this isn't a discussion for what those numbers look like, right? I know it's not specific to what you're asking, but you have to have support, but you also have to have the right kind of kids that are truly loyal.

Look, I know you're saying not specific to us, but we

haven't really gotten got, as I like to say, in terms of the transfer portal. I'm not saying we won't, and who knows what happens after this ride, whenever it ceases to exist anymore.

But our culture and our connectivity and our program has had the ability -- and we are certainly not the only ones, right? I mean, let's look at a Southern Miss. For the most part, they keep all their elite players as a team in our league, Coastal, Louisiana, et cetera. You have to keep your players.

And how you do that is certainly a multifaceted operation, but retainment becomes the most imperative aspect, and I think you retain if kids really feel connected to the program that they're in at that time.

If you do that, then runs such as this are actually possible. I think without it they're not. You can't just be a bunch of Nomads that come together. You can maybe do that in the SEC. If you just procure the best-of-the-best talent and you have the elite coaching you have in there, it can happen, I believe. But I think for everyone else, you have to have a lot of pieces gelled together in the right way.

Q. The boys up here on stage have been talking about the weather that you guys have faced throughout the postseason, Sun Belt Conference tournament and in Gainesville. And when you've got Blake talking about how muddy and dirty they want to get and they don't care, I assume you've got a great equipment manager that's taking care of all these uniforms and everything. If you've not looked at the forecast, there is chances for scattered showers throughout Omaha. So what have you guys done throughout managing the weather throughout the postseason and in a time of the year where you've played your best baseball?

SKYLAR MEADE: It's funny they say what they say because I do believe we're all prisoners of the moment. Early in the year, we had literally doubleheaders our first two weekends, and we didn't play a single one in '25. Okay. Maybe we didn't handle it the best. Maybe we didn't get the right food for them. Maybe we went too long without speaking to them to tell them what's going on. Maybe we told them too much of what's going on. Maybe we were too transparent. Maybe they needed to be a little naive. But we had a multitude of them.

And I think where it totally turned -- and I think it was Blake hit on this just a little bit, but we were playing at Texas State on a Friday night, our starter Stubbs was rolling. We got out to a good start, and then we had heard there may be a storm coming, and there was.

Unfortunately, we lost our starter. And we sat there for three hours and 25 minutes. And we played late in the night. And we lost the lead in the ninth inning, and we lost a game.

Then, because weather was so bad coming in on Sunday, we had to get up after leaving the park at 1:05 a.m. and be there at 9:00 and play a doubleheader the next day. And in that double-header, we went 15-2 in the first game, and then we win a wild extra-inning game. Josh Pyne hits a home run. Drew Nelson comes in from left field and we win.

And I think to play those 20, really 29 innings in 27 hours, to overcome things, that was kind of a pivotal turn, where we figured out how we can best handle all things. And then from there, any issue we had the rest of the way, it was much more seamless.

And I think you have to figure it out. Just like you have to figure out how to throw a curveball and you have to figure out how to lay off a slider. All those baseball things. Sometimes you've got to figure out how to be good in a little bit of chaos.

And what our guys did in the Sunbelt tournament, and watching how they were able to decompress, reload, re-edge, like repurpose their mind, was one of the more impressive things I've seen them do. And they did. They parlayed that to what we've gone through beyond, and they had to do it. And that's all about the player.

Q. Question about the Sun Belt Conference. Two or three years ago, Sunbelt had more bids than the Big Ten did. Last year, you're down to two host teams. This year you bounce back up to five. What do you think that says about the prominence of the conference in the college baseball world?

SKYLAR MEADE: I'm glad you didn't hit too much on the 2 and 25, I may or may not have made waves not being really excited about that.

I think -- look, I think our league deserves the highest level of respect, whatever that means. This is how I would phrase it. Whatever our league actually deserves, they should get.

And we all know what I thought we should have got in '25, and this year, we trumped expectations, we got five teams in. And, of course, we have another program that's in Omaha. But our league deserves respect. It's the prominent sport in our league. It's great fan bases. It's great players. It's great stories.

And the league's had great success against the best. And you have to have that. And I think when given that rightful opportunity for our league, somebody's going to rise up to the top. I'm just really proud that this year it's the Trojans.

Q. Have you settled on a starting pitcher for tomorrow? What has stood out to you about West Virginia the last four or five days that you've had a chance to deep dive into the Mountaineers?

SKYLAR MEADE: Absolutely. We're starting Benjamin Stubbs tomorrow, senior, left-handed pitcher. Myself and Coach Sabins made sure to confirm that amongst each other. So we know the direction they're going.

But West Virginia, first off, I know how hard those guys work in recruiting, and unfortunately for the Trojans, many times we lose battles when we go against West Virginia. They were winning those because they have an awesome program and it's such a cool place.

I actually went there in 2022 to recruit in the Draft League. I was up there following the guys around. And I'd never been to West Virginia as it is now. And I was blown away by the facilities, the area, the food, the hotels by there, the campus. I got to tour with Neal Brown their football facility and all that. I was blown away. I'm like, man, if I was a recruit, I could end up here.

And but specific to their team, I mean, the athleticism is impressive. Three guys with over 19 steals, obviously they can do some skill game. That Kelly kid is as good as it gets, as just an overall player. He's a dynamic guy who can dump you. He still can run.

I think they have a real identity and, of course, from a pitching perspective, they have pitched really well. They assault the strike zone, and I think all their pitchers, for the most part, they understand how they get you. And they stay in character often.

So I credit Coach Sabins and his staff. They've earned this. Not that it's a competition of, like, who earned it more. But I feel like both our programs have been pushing in this way.

So it's kind of poetic in a way that we're going to get to battle it out, because I know we both have been striving to be this, whereas -- I'm not sure how long you've covered West Virginia, but I'm sure at some point if someone said, hey, West Virginia's going to be amazing, they're going to win, they're going to be a host, all that, you'd be like, "Hmm." Right?

There was probably a point in time where it was thought of

that way, just as we talked about nearly five years ago when I got hired that we want to win a national championship. We want to go to Omaha. It's going to happen. We know it's going to happen. And I'm sure people go, "Okay, that sounds good, Coach."

But it's happened for both of us, and I think both of us have truly earned it by the work and the hours and the effort that's been put in by everyone that's involved in the program.

Q. When we talked in Gainesville, after the Rider victory, heading into that Sunday against Miami, you said you're going to just feel out the pitching. You're going to get weird with it. Can you talk about just how the pitching stepped up against Miami, taking down Florida twice and then rolling into that Little Rock super regional?

SKYLAR MEADE: The pitching really did. These guys have been tremendous. We have been beating them. By "we," it's all of us, but me just beating them into submission about, you know, how they lock in in their daily activities, how they visualize what it is they need to do; maybe some guys changing what they need to do, between myself, Coach Ross, Coach Gainous, who are the ones with the pitchers all the time. That's been a huge, huge thing.

Not that we never did that, but maybe after being a little more mean about it, which resonates for our guys. So I have to be mean, even though I'm a very nice guy and I'm generally happy as it is.

But these guys have been good. They've just been good, and we've had good stuff. I mean, as you guys have either seen or watched -- I mean, that final against Florida, Hayden Smith comes out there, and he's been awesome. He's a lefty. He's throwing the ball 88, 92. And then we bring in Stubbs, and he's ripping 98. And then let's go with Thigpen, and he's 94-96. Like, we don't throw bums out there. We're throwing guys.

Now, at the same time some of them were not at their peak early in the year, but I think, as I alluded to, as a team, I think it worked out this year a little bit from a pitching perspective where we figured our way through the year, we learned things. Sometimes you learn hard lessons.

But guys have changed. You mentioned seeing Jabe and the bat. I know sometimes with pitching it's a little bit different. But if you were to watch some guys, you'd be like, oh, that wasn't what he looked like in February.

I think the eye test and "how they go about it" test has really had to change, and it's tested us as coaches, it's

tested the players. But those guys have really stepped up, and I'm really proud of what they've done to assist in the process of getting us here.

Q. What do you hope that your appearance here and the run you guys have gone on does for non-P4 representation in the tournament? You've been outspoken about that over the last couple of years. What's your hope for that as this moves forward to the future?

SKYLAR MEADE: I don't mean this petty, but I do think it is validating. I do. I mean -- we've talked, I'm going to answer honestly, I do feel it's very validating. I know many times as someone who, I guess, maybe people deem outspoken, I don't think I'm outspoken, I try to speak facts as much as possible. If I have something that's not a fact, I want someone to tell me, certainly.

But programs like us and many others that maybe don't get an opportunity, we have awesome players. We can get here. I'm not saying we're going to win a national championship. It's going to be really tough. It's going to be really tough to win on Friday.

But we can. We've proven that against the best of the best. We've earned this right to be here. And there are other programs such as ours that could do the same thing. Maybe they do. Maybe they don't.

But I think this misnomer, they're in this league, no, let's put the best of the best in here and let's duke this thing out. It's like, hey, we don't need to throw somebody that's not able to do it in whatever league, fill in the blank league. Like come on, like they shouldn't be here, take the team that's earned it. Like that's what this whole thing's supposed to be about. That's why there's a committee, right? Like, use the eyes, use the metrics and all that. Just put the best of the best.

And that's why people have asked me, were you surprised you got in? I was not surprised we got in. We earned the right. We were crazy enough to play the number one non-con schedule, sixth overall schedule. We win everywhere. We were an honorary member of the SEC. We've played on the road in the SEC.

That's the other thing, too, that I think gets forgotten a little bit. And, by the way, I am well aware the SEC is the best of the best. I coached in the league four years before. My respect for what that league is as high as it can be. It will be matched with whoever has the highest.

But what I will tell you that is different for the SEC. Let's just say us when we do this, we are playing on the road all

the time okay.

Wes was kind enough to bring us over twice for Georgia. Of course in the regional, you play Florida twice. We played Bama. And now Bama plays us home and home. We went up to Vandy. We went over to Mississippi State again. Okay. Not to mention all the other teams, but just as it pertains to the SEC.

It's not like we just go, hey, Wes, can you bring Tre and Danny and the boys and come over to Troy like on Tuesday. Like, let's do it. Like, it's not how it works. So we have to get inventive. We play teams as we go somewhere, and that's tough. And you might lose games doing that, but you can't be scared of it.

But I think the fact that it was respected at the level it was this year and getting us into the dance. As other teams aside from us do it, I hope that it's respected and rewarded in the same way.

Q. Along those lines, are the non-Power 4 conference teams better in baseball than maybe we're seeing in other sport I know Tulane and James Madison made the CFP. I don't know if there's a kind of tidal wave thing. But you guys are great. Coastal Carolina. I know ECU hadn't been here. Texas State almost beat Stanford there. I was curious how your NIL budget compares with the SEC teams.

SKYLAR MEADE: I'll answer the last one first. They win. (Laughter).

Now, if like Schloss, Coach Bianco, they want to leave a couple of bills out there, I will certainly grab them on the way. They're doing all right there.

Now I lost the first part. Look, those teams that you alluded to there and those programs, they're going to knock the door down, too. They really are. When that is, I don't know. But I have believed this about our program, and I'm fortunate -- I know I'm sitting here in a press conference in Omaha, which is certainly an exciting day for myself and all these guys, what they get to experience.

But I really have believed that we can win a national championship at Troy. And when I speak to people in the community or whoever I speak to, or my wife and I's women's clinic, and we're talking to 72 women that maybe don't want to learn about baseball, don't know, and I start talking to them about our dreams of winning a national championship, they sometimes probably are like, oh, that sounds good, and they're, like, all right, let's go back to the open bar.

Like, no, I'm dead serious. I'm dead serious. We can. I'm not saying we will. But we can. And we aren't the only ones. Fortunately we're the ones that are carrying that torch for the non-P4s in this country. So I feel the support of all the others that are in our spot, but it is a certifiable fact that we can. You don't get here if you cannot. That is just how it works.

And so I am pleased with that. I'm also glad that now people can't say I'm an idiot for things that I say. But someone's going to do it. And guess what, people have. I mean, Coach Gilmore, who, by the way, Coach Gilmore, what an amazing guy and what he did with Coastal in '16. I know everyone knows the story. But just what an awesome guy. He welcomed me into the league when I was just running around like a dumb 36-, 37-year-old that has no idea what he's doing and late to my first Sun Belt head coach's meeting because I was trying to figure out where the heck I was living in Troy and had no idea what I was doing. And first text, hey, you're good. No one cares, you know?

But I think we all support each other outside of that -- that's not that the Power 4s don't. That's not my point. But, like, there's such a connectivity, and we're all trying to strive for the same thing. And so I think people like Coach Gilmore have led the way for not just myself, but for, like, many other people who have broke through or will break through soon.

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