

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 12, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**West Virginia Mountaineers**

**Coach Steve Sabins**

**Armani Guzman**

**Tyrus Hall**

**Ian Korn**

Postgame Press Conference

West Virginia - 7, Troy - 5

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by West Virginia coach Steve Sabins and student-athletes Armani Guzman, Tyrus Hall and Ian Korn.

STEVE SABINS: Really fun game, excited to be here. I thought the guys played great. I want to make sure I spend a little bit of time on just how well Troy played and how well coached they are and how competitive that team is. And what Skylar Meade has done with that program is nothing short of incredible. They deserve a ton of credit.

I thought our guys came out fearless and aggressive, and it started with Armani turning an error into a double and advancing to third on a throw across the diamond and stealing home. And it wasn't anything that's completely unusual to us, but it was just playing the way that we play.

So I was really proud of the guys just settling in. We saw Chansen Cole get hit a little bit for basically the first time basically the first time all season, so he'll bounce back and be great again.

But what Ian Korn did in that game to stabilize it to go six innings, two hits was nothing short of miraculous. And McDougal with a big out there to close it.

But a lot of heroes throughout the game. The guys left of me, certainly those. And Tyrus Hall played as good as anybody, had the big double off the left-center field wall, followed it up by incredible defensive play that ended up saving a run.



But I thought we played clean baseball. I thought the guys were grounded and were themselves. And I think that's all you're looking for this time of year.

**Q. Armani, you're the first player in Omaha to steal home in 26 years. What did you see from Stubbs on the mound to time him up and take that home base?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: Yeah, credit to our coaching staff. They do a lot of scouting reports and they watch a lot of video. And going into the game, we had some queues with multiple guys that they have. And we just executed a plan that we had.

**Q. Ian, came in a little bit earlier than you probably expected today. What was working for you in shutting down that extremely hot Troy lineup?**

IAN KORN: As a pitching staff, every guy on that staff is ready to go in whenever their name's called. We wanted Chansen to go a little longer, but we were all ready to go. And when your name is called, you're ready to go and firing with all pitches.

I went out there. I was throwing some more cutters than usual. Slider wasn't working. We threw some more curveballs. So we were mixing up a little more than usual, kind of against the scouting report they probably had. So our goal was just to go out there and throw strikes, and that's what I did.

**Q. Tyrus, you have had 14 RBIs since regional play. What can you say about your performance in postseason lately?**

TYRUS HALL: Just trying to be aggressive and attack whatever pitch I can get.

**Q. Armani, I was curious how many times you have stolen home in your career. And if you could describe the jump. And were you scared you were taking out the umpire?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: I think I've definitely done it a lot more in practice than in the game. I don't think I've ever done it



in a game like that, but I do it a lot in practice in the fall, and the early spring.

But when I hit the umpire, I kind of got the wind knocked out of me. It kind of hurt. The adrenaline was there, so I didn't really feel it until I got back into the dugout.

**Q. Tyrus, you've certainly been seeing red throughout the postseason, hitting it very well. But a question on Ben Lumsden today. Two sacrifices right in front of you in the lineup. And I know he's had a really nice postseason as well. Just a statement on him and his overall game?**

TYRUS HALL: Postseason Lumsden is just incredible. I've never seen anything like it. It's like Barry Bonds up in front of me. And it's nice to sit behind him because it puts pressure on the guy, they've got to get him first.

**Q. Armani and Tyrus, on the first inning, and your play and your hit, Tyrus, in the eighth, how much do you guys -- how much comfort and confidence do you get just knowing this environment was very friendly to you? And can you speak to just the support that you guys have here in Omaha and have had all through the postseason from your fans?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: It was cool. Like the regional and super regional this year were the first time we've ever been at home. And I said it before, but you kind of feel like the superheroes when you win those games. And it's just really cool to be able to do it for the fans and your teammates.

TYRUS HALL: Yeah, it's been, especially for my first year here, just seeing it on TV and now being a part of it, it's incredible having the fans here and all the support. I couldn't wait for anything better.

**Q. Mentally, playing on the biggest stage, how do you compartmentalize but also play in front of the West Virginia fans that have been behind you guys all the postseason?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: For me, personally, like, I watch videos of me in the intrasquads and I watch videos of me in the super regional. But just having that self-confidence and that belief in yourself is all that it takes.

**Q. Ian, incredible all season long. Then got, I guess, hit a little bit in the regional. I know you bounced back in that third game of the super, the second game of the super. And today, to return to who you've been all year long, what's that process been like coming through the regional to now?**

IAN KORN: In that regional, those two home runs I gave up, I knew that they didn't matter because the guys right here were going to pick me up. So I was bummed to be taken out of the game like that, but it wasn't going to change my process. It wasn't going to change anything.

So I went out there for the super regional outing, just did what I usually did. And I didn't even remember what happened in the regional. So just kind of flushing it and getting back to work is what got me here.

**Q. Armani, what are your initial thoughts of breaking the steals record? And how cool is it that you did it in, like, a fitting way of stealing home, like the Mountaineer way?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: I think that was the coolest part of it, me stealing home. I think that's what West Virginia baseball is known for. And I feel like Victor Scott is one of those guys who kind of started that thing. I think it was really special for it to be on this stage that way.

**Q. Coach talked about you getting to this stage and playing like yourselves, playing clean and confident baseball. Not a lot of teams -- sometimes you see teams not do that. First time here especially on this stage, it is a different feel. How were you guys able to be yourselves and kind of get comfortable in this setting?**

ARMANI GUZMAN: I think from day one, in the fall, you kind of know how much you want to win. And from the first game of the season to now, we want to win just as much whether it's against Georgia Southern, opening day, or today against Troy at Omaha. It's just one of those things where we know we want to win and we want to succeed as a team.

IAN KORN: It's 90 feet, 60-feet, 6-inches -- like, you know, I might have stole that from Chansen last week. But it's the same old game that we've been playing. So to have a crowd that traveled with us, it almost feels like a home game again.

Having that support and having the support of the coaches and everyone that traveled with us, you can't ask for much more from everyone behind us. So when you get out there, it's the whole team, the whole program, the whole state against one guy.

STEVE SABINS: I don't think the players really understand how rooted or grounded they are. Ian Korn, after the couple home runs that you were referring to earlier, after the game when we won and had the big win, you were like,

that would have been a tough night if we didn't win that ball game. I was like, damn right.

But the mentality from you is literally -- it would have been a tough night but we'd get over it, like we'd move on. So it's like a self-confidence. It's whatever shakes, I'm pretty sure I'll be all right, right? And so it's a unique -- most young people aren't wired that way and there's a bunch of guys on this team like that.

**Q. Had to be the first College World Series game where both starters were pitching in Division II last year. What does that say about roster building in today's game?**

STEVE SABINS: Really cool. Just the fact that those kids got a chance to go pitch on the biggest stage that there is in college baseball and are both really, really talented and have led their teams to Omaha just shows you why our sport's a little bit different.

Like, skill develops. It's not always talent, where in some other major sports, talent is always king. Sometimes just growth and strength and skill. And when strength meets skill, you can start to get really good.

There's like this evolution of baseball players. That's why you can always see great players at all these different levels. So if you're courageous enough as a coach like Skylar Meade is, I think this Division II guy can take us to Omaha without being feeling too crazy, and you'd really trust your gut and your evaluation, then those things can happen.

And so pretty amazing, like Ian Korn, just who that guy is and his presence and his ability to do that, it's just because he's very talented. He developed a little bit later in his career. And I think a lot of times those D-II kids, things haven't always been easy for them, and there's been some adversity along the way, and that matters in this sport.

And the development hasn't always been easy. So when you get to a great program that has those resources, they're so thankful for them and they take advantage of them every day.

For me I've got a little bit of a soft spot because I was a walk-on at a junior college. And I played at Division I, and then I ended up playing at an NAIA school that's now D-II.

And so I just remember throughout my journey, there's some guys on the team who are like, I'm pretty sure that guy's like way better than the guy that I was at Division I with or the three hole for Angelina Junior College, that guy should be banging in the Big 12, right?

But there's just a lot of factors, whether it's where they're from or their background, or their grades at that time, or if they were able to play in certain tournaments. So I think part of the fun in recruiting is trying to find those guys that maybe are a little bit undervalued.

**Q. Two outs, tying run at the plate, and he's the Sun Belt player of the year. And you turn to Ben McDougal for his first save of the year. Can you explain that decision?**

STEVE SABINS: I can. Dougal's had ice water in his veins. He's a killer. And he's one of the most quiet guys and most humble guys. And he's from the state of West Virginia. And every big moment that he's ever been put in, he's basically been himself or elevated his game.

Four-hole for Troy smashes baseballs, and that's what he did the at-bat before, when he hit Korn for the homer to left center. The ball was hit about 115 miles an hour.

And so match-up-wise, we just believed that left-handed was better against Janicki in that situation. And it's easy because Korn was kind of -- not easy, Korn was kind of cruising, and so we knew that Korn was going to face the first three hitters, and if it got to Janicki, we were going to go to McDougal.

But after he clips off two quick outs, then it's a walk, you're like, damn, I wish we weren't in that spot, right. Because the guy's throwing strikes and handling the moment. And so there's always that unknown when you bring somebody out of the bullpen in the big moment.

It's just with McDougal, he's so convicted and he's been in those moments so many times that we just, at the end of the day, what I told myself is you're either playing to win or you're playing to lose essentially. So you've got to play to win, because it's the right match-up with the right kid and the extra bases, right versus left, is completely different. He's been a different hitter this year versus left-handed fastball. And so we just had to go rip the Band-Aid off and do that.

**Q. What role did you feel like defense played in the outcome today?**

STEVE SABINS: Huge role. I think starting with Tyrus Hall's diving play in the 6-hole and then Brodie Kresser handled the ball really well. Maybe started with Gavin Kelly at second base early in that game. Left-handed hitter hit a ball up the middle and he went bent-knee slide up the middle and then set his feet and threw a strike to first base. Those are just game changers.

Especially to set the tone and just settle in especially a hard play right off the bat, if you're timid at all, you just don't make those plays. So the kids were in a great, great headspace.

Ben Lumsden had a good throw home. Armani Guzman had a good throw home. Guzman played a really nice play running back on the ball to deep right-center. I think that was in the ninth. Paul Schoenfeld played clean baseball. We threw to the correct bases. Graveline had a nice throw to second base.

I'm going to joke with Matty Ineich because if somebody doesn't get the tag down, we always say soft tags, soft person, soft player. So he had that soft tag or maybe it wasn't soft, that's not fair, busted his balls, but a tag that the guy barely got in but the ball beat him. So Graveline threw really well and handled the game really good behind the plate.

**Q. Bottom third of the lineup has carried a lot of weight for this club lately, whether it's Brodie, Tyrus or Ben. What did you see from really Tyrus today, but also that group, really, the last few weeks?**

STEVE SABINS: They've just been tremendous and doing great, and I don't know that Lumsden has a sacrifice bunt on the season. So to have two really big ones was huge. He has bunt skill, but he's like a big man. He's 6'4", left-handed, more of a power bat. So for him to be able to get those bunts down in that moment was huge, left on left with right heaters. It's hard, you gotta get on top of the ball on that fastball; it's very easy to pop that ball up.

And so that first one was about as close as you can get. Pyne at third base, I think he laid out or thought about laying out on the first bunt and if he catches that ball in the air, we're probably triple-play territory, which would have been devastating for the Mountaineers. But he got the job done.

The next time it came up, we thought they might run a wheel play or be aggressive on the corners coming in. But Lumsden was able to just kill the bunt in front of home plate. And Tyrus came up huge. And you can't bunt to a 9-hole unless you think the 9-hole can make contact and have a great at-bat.

And so that's kind of where Tyrus is at right now from a confidence standpoint, and my belief in him is you bunt the 8-hole, who is the postseason RBI leader for West Virginia all-time, to get to the 9-hole. But you just believe that he's going to have a great at-bat because of how he's seeing the ball in his batting practice and where he's at right now.

So that was cool, certainly, when it works out.

And Tyrus is a freak athlete, really is a freak athlete. And he's starting to piece all this stuff together. He's one of those guys that is a junior college, whether it's Division II or junior college or whatever, he's developing. He was the best athlete in Canada as a high school guy. He was playing on the junior national team and was the fastest guy, and he could throw the hardest. And now it's starting to piece all this skill stuff together. And it's pretty fun and pretty scary to see.

**Q. West Virginia's close the last two years. Now you're here, you're on this big stage. It's the only game going on is your game. So regardless of the outcome, what did you want people to learn about your program in this big stage?**

STEVE SABINS: I think that's just handling itself. There's more media attention and excitement than I could possibly stomach. Every corner you're turning there's a new story line, there's a new excitement. There's some Jello-shot records being broken and everything in between, right?

So, I'm on the other end. You're just trying to just protect the kids' sanity and trying to make sure that they're level-headed and they recognize that sometimes it's okay to say no in certain situations, because they're pleasers and they want to handle this thing the right way and be professional and all those things.

So I think want people to know that our culture means a lot to us and that this thing has been built by people, and it's been built by our staff, and it's been built on the belief that you can accomplish anything that you want if you have the belief.

And that's what this place is all about. Our state is a state that's really rooted in unity and rooting for each other and believing that anything is possible -- and it's a little bit of a chip on the shoulder kind of state. It's a small rural state that thinks that things haven't always gone their way. You've got to fight extra hard and work extra hard and you've got to show up longer and harder in order to accomplish great things. So that's kind of the mentality that our team has taken.

**Q. Talk about first World Series game for the program. Could say the same thing for Troy. Troy's coach comes out and talks about how his team is fearless. The first thing comes out of your mouth when you come in your first statement was talking about your team is fearless. We talked about how gritty the Mountaineers are, as if this wasn't the grittiest ball game you could possibly see back and forth between**

**two teams. Just talk about the build of the program and how baseball players just fall into that kind of mentality.**

STEVE SABINS: I think this was game 61 for the Mountaineers. And in order to get here in West Virginia, you're practicing long, hard days. When you get back from Christmas break, you're in sleet, and you're in snow, and you're in freezing temperatures.

We travel as much as anybody in the nation. We got Cincinnati in the league now, so every couple of years you get a bus trip. But other than that, we're bussing an hour and a half to the Pittsburgh airport and then flying out of there across the country, oftentimes, to small college towns. Got another two or three hours on that side.

And so playing 61 games together, the amount of hotel eggs that you've eaten together and the amount of time that you've spent together and the amount of adversity and the ups and downs, you just end up becoming really close with the team because things happen in life. Parents get sick and grandparents die and school happens and girlfriends happen, and you just grow with these guys.

And I think the tighter and the more you win, the closer the group gets together. So I think some of that grit just comes from trusting each other and kind of letting go of whatever, like, happens to me individually happens. Let's go fight for something bigger than ourselves.

And so I think grit is more based on kind of love and relationship, probably, than it's really about like being mean and angry on the field. It's more about just, like, dude, you're giving your best, I'm giving my best. We'll go to war together. Whatever happens, happens.

They know that the staff's staying up 12 hours a day doing scouting reports. We know that they're going to bed on time and hydrating and making good choices and bringing positive energy and representing the program with class. It's just a unity.

At a certain point, like when Armani scored on that steal home, he pops up and he points at me, I'm pointing to him at the same time. It was just a natural thing. It wasn't like we planned that, right? But it's like giving credit to each other and working together. These guys are as much peers as anything.

There's obviously a coach and player relationship, but they're super respectful kids, and they want to do the right stuff. But it really comes down to being on an even playing field and working together to try to accomplish cool stuff.

**Q. The moment when they played Country Roads, I've never heard anything or seen anything like that at the series. What was that like for you?**

STEVE SABINS: It was awesome. Makes me really proud. I was thinking about it after Tyrus hit the double down the right field line and we scored. I'm like we might have a chance to sing Country Roads here in front of the country, and then I told myself to get those thoughts out of my head, that's poison, don't go there, stay in the moment. All those kind of thoughts. But that was my thought just because it is unifying and it is exciting and our state loves it, and it's about togetherness and all the stuff that we're into as coaches.

So I'm excited for the kids to stand on that line and look up and see thousands of fans, some Mountaineer fans and some not, and the ones that aren't, it's almost even cooler because they're like I want to get in on this, I want to be part of this thing.

So for me, it meant everything. We get to do it after every win, and so I think the nation is now getting to share in that, which is pretty special.

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