

2026 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 12, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Ole Miss Rebels

Coach Mike Bianco

Judd Utermark

Taylor Rabe

Postgame Press Conference

North Carolina - 6, Ole Miss - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Ole Miss coach Mike Bianco and student-athletes Taylor Rabe and Judd Utermark.

MIKE BIANCO: Obviously, it's disappointing we weren't able to finish. That doesn't happen much to us. But credit a really good North Carolina team. I thought DeCaro was tremendous tonight, and Glauber, the reliever, just as good.

We knew that going in. We knew that obviously DeCaro was a true ace and an All-American closer.

But we had the lead, and we couldn't finish. But I thought Taylor pitched his guts off today. And, of course, Judd with the big hit. Just came up a little short. And it happens.

But again, it's frustrating, disappointing for us. But, again, North Carolina did more to win it than we did.

Q. Taylor, how would you evaluate your night?

TAYLOR RABE: Yeah, it was all right. Not my best stuff, I would say. I was a little out of sync with four walks and something you can't do against this team. They do a really good job of taking advantage of free bases.

So I was able to battle there and get us a little bit of length. I would have liked to finish out the sixth and have Huddy have a fresh inning. But, yeah, overall it was all right.

Q. Judd, eight guys left on base tonight. How do you fix that heading into an elimination game on Sunday?



JUDD UTERMARK: Get more hits, I think. That's the obvious answer. I don't know. I really did think that a lot of our at-bats were good, even with runners on base, even though we left them stranded. We worked counts.

But ultimately they played better than us today. And it's frustrating to have to admit that. But that's the beauty of Omaha, is you get to play another one.

Q. What was DeCaro specifically doing well in the bullpen that made it difficult to establish rallies?

JUDD UTERMARK: DeCaro obviously his numbers are really good. But he locates it very well. His stuff is great. But that's not what gets guys in trouble. It's not the strikeouts, necessarily, even though we had quite a few tonight. It was more of the weak contact that he produces. And we rolled into a double play in that last inning. He just gets a lot of ground balls, a lot of weak pop-ups. And that's what he plays off of.

Q. Taylor, you only surrendered the one hit tonight. What do you think they were doing well? And early on, it looked like they were just trying to work your count, whether they were getting good contact or not. Just your thoughts on that?

TAYLOR RABE: I thought they weren't an overly aggressive team. I think they did a good job of making me getting into deep counts and have my pitch count elevated early.

And, so, I felt like I was getting to two strikes, and with two strikes I was making some good pitches and they were fouling them off. I think that's kind of one of their strengths as a team and their approach as an offense. And they did a really good job of that.

Q. I know this is obviously disappointing after a loss, but just experiencing this moment and embracing the weekend in Omaha so far, can you talk to me about your emotions after being able to be in that moment and being in Omaha and playing in front of your fans and your family within this great weekend of Ole Miss baseball?



JUDD UTERMARK: It's an unbelievable experience. The NCAA has treated us nothing but royalty here. It's been awesome to be able to meet certain people, do certain experiences.

But ultimately, we're here to play baseball, and it's the pinnacle of college baseball. So we're blessed to be here. And our journey is not over. I can tell you that.

TAYLOR RABE: It was cool to see all the Ole Miss fans in the hotel today. And it was also playing in front of 24,000 people like that, I don't know if you'll get that until you get to the Major Leagues. And so it was a really great experience so far.

Q. You guys haven't even played an elimination game in the NCAA Tournament yet, but you won a couple last year in Oxford. What are the keys to going into a game like that?

TAYLOR RABE: I think we've played in a bunch of series this year, where we had the Sunday game as a rubber match. So it's a similar feel to that. And you don't really need to do anything differently, I think. You just play your game and make pitches and things like that. But I feel if you do something more, I don't think you're going to get the result you want in the end.

JUDD UTERMARK: Yeah, I'd say the same thing. I think the human nature may be to tighten up or to stress during situations like that. I think that our team is in a good position because we're a kind of light-going group of guys. So I think it plays to our advantage, put a little fire under our butt. And getting ready to go ultimately to the final.

Q. Coach, big at-bat there for Judd, 3-0. How many of the guys do you trust in this lineup to be able to go out there and get the green light 3-0 and go get that hit for you?

MIKE BIANCO: Well, I think in critical situations, sometimes it is the best pitch. So it's -- obviously Judd's one of our better players. But I don't know if it's necessarily your best players. You know sometimes I think the eight-hole guy can benefit from that.

And those opportunities, to be able to drive in a run, to get a good pitch, I think the risk/reward is lopsided to the success of it.

Q. Six postseason games for you now. In the ninth inning, all of these games have been tight-wire close. And you've gone to extra innings twice. Even in a couple of your wins, the other teams had a tying run or

a go-ahead run at the plate in the ninth. Can you talk about just being on the other end of one of those close battles and how you guys prepare to go through the losers' bracket here in Omaha?

MIKE BIANCO: Well, that's what I mentioned earlier in the opening statement. You know, usually we're able to finish it. So sometimes it doesn't. And so it's a bitter taste I think in all of our mouths.

Enough blame to go around, what could have happened. But at the end of the day, we didn't do enough to win the baseball game.

And I think sometimes you have to credit them as well. They executed. They got big, timely hits. I don't think it was necessarily that we didn't get runs in. Somebody asked earlier about runs being left on. I mean, heck, I don't think we had very many opportunities, but the opportunities we did, we seemed to cash in.

Yeah, maybe we're a double away from extending the lead, but at the end of the day, we lost 6-2. And I think more credit should go to them.

I think Taylor said it best. I mean, their at-bats, even though he kept putting zeros up, just some great at-bats, with two strikes, fouling pitches up, running his pitch count up. It was one of those nights that I think it was more of what North Carolina did and less of what we didn't do.

Q. You've been in all these big intense games. In the middle of the game, how are you slowing it down for yourself and, in turn, for the players?

MIKE BIANCO: I don't think anybody really cares about my mental state in the middle of the game. But I'm fortunate that I've got a great staff. And I lean on those guys, and I really do.

The decisions that are made are usually a collective decision, with the pitching coach or the hitting coach. So, plus, I've done it for a long time. So I don't think anybody's worried about me.

Q. Yesterday you talked a lot about mental toughness. What's the conversation like tonight and tomorrow to kind of flip the script after a disappointing loss like this?

MIKE BIANCO: It's a great question, and it really was the message afterwards. We really lean into that phrase. We handle hard. And so now we just put ourselves in a difficult, hard situation.



When you lose and you lose in the College World Series, obviously it's emotional, it's disappointing. But as I think Judd said or Taylor said or mentioned, you're still in it. You've got 24 hours to kind of reset, get a good practice tomorrow, and another 24 hours to come out and play better baseball.

And so I think that's what the plan is. That's how you flip the script. That's how you do this thing, is get back and play a better baseball game.

Somebody else asked, what do you do? You don't do anything. You play better. So that's what the hope will be, and practice tomorrow and then getting back out here on Sunday.

Q. Calhoun and Hooks have been so good for you good for you guys this postseason. Just what did you see from them tonight?

MIKE BIANCO: You can't give them free base runs. I looked down, and I think what Taylor was talking about, we walked six batters and we hit one. So we gave them seven free base runners. You can't do that. You can't do that when the game's on the line.

So we've got to attack more, but some of that was their, I think, doing and being able to foul balls off and just grind out some ABs, just lengthening the at-bat until they ended up winning a final 3-2 pitch.

But again we have to be better than that, and we've got to make them -- on this field, wind's blowing in -- you've got to make them hit the ball somewhere.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports