

2026 Men's College World Series

Friday, June 12, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

North Carolina Tar Heels

Coach Scott Forbes

Jason DeCaro

Colin Hynek

Owen Hull

Postgame Press Conference

North Carolina - 6, Ole Miss - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by North Carolina coach Scott Forbes and student-athletes Jason DeCaro, Owen Hull and Colin Hynek.

SCOTT FORBES: I hope everybody's doing great. What a great day. Day one at the College World Series, there's never a bad day here. Beautiful day. Field is gorgeous. We're just thankful to be here. It's an honor and a privilege for us to be playing here.

Pitching duel, good night -- their guy was on, our guy was on. It was hard to do anything offensively for both teams. The way our team's been -- first of all, they have a heck of a team, shout-out to them for being here -- well-coached, physical and some really, really good arms that we had to face today.

Our guys kept hanging around, piecing it together. Got a little bit better as we went along. Had some base runners, just couldn't get the big hit. And obviously I thought Owen Hull swinging the bat let the air out a little bit. It's hard to hit a home run here. But to do that opposite field tells you how talented he is.

And then Colin Hynek with the big blow.

And I also thought that Caden Glauber, who is supposed to be at his high school graduation, was pretty dang good as well. Obviously he gave up the 3-0 hit but he came right back and struck the next guy out.

And just two really good teams. And thankful that we came



out on top.

Q. Owen, tell me about the blast. What were you looking for? And was there kind of a tension there going into that at that because you guys couldn't get anything going?

OWEN HULL: First of all, that pitch was really good. The whole Ole Miss team is very good. So we came in with a game plan. And, yeah, we tried to execute every at-bat.

I was sitting on heater. I got one up in the zone, so I put a good swing on it.

Credit to Jason here, great pitcher. I'm really happy to have him on our team. And he did really well. And then Colin with the three-run blast was pretty cool. I was very excited for him.

Q. Colin, after the 3-0 hit given up by Caden, walking off the mound, you met him halfway. Was there a message to Caden about just calming down, big moment for a high school senior, really, but now a freshman, heading into that ninth inning?

COLIN HYNEK: Coming off the mound, I just told him just simply good job, did a good job of bouncing back, getting the next guy and getting us in the dugout. And then just going into the ninth inning, was just you know, go out there and be yourself.

He's one of the best pitchers in the country. So there's no reason to not act like it for him. So anytime he's on the mound, we trust him. As long as he's himself, he's pretty much unhittable.

Q. Jason, that's two starts in Omaha with one run each. Did you take anything from your Virginia start two years ago into tonight? And if so, what was that?

JASON DECARO: Yeah, absolutely. Just trying to slow myself down a little bit. We talked earlier in the week about how we're taking it one pitch at a time. I feel like I did a pretty good job with that.

And then credit to the offense finding a way in the end there. Just happy to pull this one out.

Q. Owen and Colin, early on you guys were able to put the pressure on with walks. Did you guys feel that any time in the game you were going to break it open with the bats?

OWEN HULL: 100 percent, yeah, we've got a really special offense, and we're going to keep being gritty. And, yeah, we got his pitch count up pretty high. And that's what our goal was.

He's a really good pitcher. He's going to go pretty high in the draft this year. I expect for him to. And, yeah, we knew we would get to him eventually and we just that.

COLIN HYNEK: Yeah, like what Owen said, we know that we're never out of the fight especially with our pitching staff. That's two games in a row that we've been pretty slow offensively until the end of the game and they've just held it in there until we could finally break through.

I thought we were putting together some solid at-bats, like Coach Forbes said, just couldn't get the big hit. Kind of like he says, we don't look at the scoreboard, we just keep playing, stick to our process and see where we're at at the end of the game.

Q. There's a third H that had a big moment tonight, couple big moments with Tyler Howe. And it feels like maybe he probably gets overlooked a little bit here. But he started the rally in the seventh and then played a key part in the eighth inning rally as well. Talk to me about his development over the course of the year because he's had his ups and downs as a freshman but he's had some big-time at-bats?

OWEN HULL: Yeah, he's very mature for a freshman. I'm really happy to have him out in outfield. He's a great player but he is also a great person off the field, and it's really cool to be around him in the locker room as well.

COLIN HYNEK: Again, to echo Owen, the kid works his butt off. Multiple times in the last couple weeks he's been working on some things with Coach Wierz. And he's the first guy back in the cage getting some extra work in, whether that be off the tee, whether it's a drill that he's trying to implement into his routine.

So it's not really a shock that the kid's come up big. You look at some big other moments this year, that kid just kind of has a knack for it.

Q. After Jason got out in the sixth inning he gave that

big fist pump coming off the mound, let's go. It looked like you guys had kind of a meeting in the dugout. At least that's what it showed on the TV. What was discussed in the meeting obviously it led to a good result because he hit the home run the next at-bat?

OWEN HULL: That's a secret. But we got our pitcher's back. He's working out there today and we knew that we had to get his back.

COLIN HYNEK: Yeah, I guess it's a secret.

Q. All things considered, Caden probably doesn't need three runs of insurance there in the ninth, but what was going through your head in the eighth inning at-bat, putting three runs up on the board?

COLIN HYNEK: Going into the at-bat, they took the visit, and Coach Wierz was just letting me know from the dugout, obviously we've got our scouting reports. The guy has a change-up that he likes to throw. It's a pretty good pitch.

So couldn't play with him down at the bottom of the zone, so I was trying to see him up. And when I saw the change-up start up just got a swing off.

And, yeah, seeing it go over is a pretty cool feeling to homer here. But, yeah, just stuck to my plan.

Q. Jason, after a couple of starts after against Virginia Tech and ECU that maybe weren't your favorite, that's 17 strikeouts compared to just seven hits in your last two outings. What's gone right for you? Do you like playing on the big stage, or what have you found recently that's being working?

JASON DECARO: Just being a better job executing when I'm ahead in the count. I feel like even in those starts, I was ahead a lot and just didn't make my pitch enough. Got punished for that.

But that's been a big focus for me over the last three or four weeks. And I feel like definitely doing a better job with that.

Q. We talked a little bit yesterday about taking it one game at a time. But that had to be pretty much the script for that pitching staff to be able to go to Jason and straight over to Caden?

SCOTT FORBES: I mean, have you to do special things to win and get this far already. But you have to do even more special things to win out here. I've told our team from the get-go, it's all about pitching and defending and being

fundamentally sound and being able to manufacture a run -- especially if you're fortunate to get out here, the ballpark's going to play a little bit bigger.

And you have to have good outings out here and that sets the tone for the whole time.

So when we made the call -- and Coach Gaines, give him credit, I feel like I've got the best pitching coach in the country. He came in my office and felt strongly that we needed to start Jason today. It was a good match-up. Me and him talked and we just said, hey, in a perfect world we're going DeCaro and Glaub, and it worked out for us.

Q. Especially after last weekend, did you feel the two-out hits and hits with runners in scoring position was eventually going to come? And it did in a big way late for you guys.

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, have you to think that. Obviously we do our scout prep and they've got some big-time arms, and we saw three big-time arms. But we've had that knack. If we stay in the game we're going to stay in the game. Our guys are going to believe. We've got some guys that can manufacture some runs.

Early on, I thought one of the best at-bats we had that's not going to show up in the box score is Cooper Nicholson. I don't know what inning that was, the second or the third, it was two pitches, two outs. And he would have been in the inning with 18 pitches. But Coop walked. We extended the inning, got him up to 37 pitches.

But our guys believe, we talk about it all the time. You gotta trust the guy behind you that means a walk, a hit-by-pitch and don't try to do too much. And I felt like we did a goodbye job with that, and eventually somebody came through with a big knock.

Q. You and your pitching coach, Bryant Gaines, were shown positively on the ESPN broadcast -- the production did a really good job of capturing your offensive meeting and also a meeting that Coach Gaines had with Caden Glauber after I think it was the seventh inning. Talk a little bit about your in-game hands-on coaching approach?

SCOTT FORBES: I mean, how about his mustache? That thing looks good right now, doesn't it? I mean, I love Bryant Gaines. I was fortunate enough to offer him way back. He just showed up pitching in the impact games a long time ago.

And he came to UNC a long time ago and he gives me a hard time because I offered him back then books, which is

about 500 bucks. And I gave him 24 hours to make a decision.

But he brings it every day. He's not just a great pitching coach, he's a great man, and he's a great mentor to these guys. The pitchers love him, they respect him. Works extremely hard.

We've been together long enough now, we understand the importance of our communication, being decisive. I think it helps that I was a pitching coach for 10 years. I've been in his shoes, I know what it's like to call every pitch.

So I just try to keep my mouth shut as much as possible. I've got the pitch comm. I just want to be there for him because I know what it's like to prep and call the pitches. And if I feel strongly, I'll let him know.

But I'm the one who sees how hard he works behind the scenes. There's nobody that's going to be more prepared going into a game than Bryant Gaines. And we also have a good time in that dugout as well.

Q. I usually ask Jason when he felt like he settles in. From your vantage point, when do you feel like he really settled in? He started hot, 10-pitch first inning?

SCOTT FORBES: I thought he was in complete control. That's the plus of having the pitch comm. I love that thing. Get to listen to Coach Williams call every pitch too. But I know what's being called and I know where the pitch is going. And some pitchers, you know, they're getting away and people don't understand.

But he was in control. Had four pitches. It was a tough decision, honestly, there to take him out of with Utermark. Still think we made the right one, even though he got a 3-0 hit. But I just felt like his delivery's been really good. I think every pitch is tunnelling, what we call every pitch is the hitter looks like he thinks it's going to be in the zone. So really I felt like from the first pitch he threw until we took him out he was in complete control.

Q. I don't know if you guys have the stats but every time you have an offensive timeout in a big moment it feels like you guys come through after they've talked to you. Gavin took the lead there. What was said to Gavin? And do you have some sort of magic touch going on right now?

SCOTT FORBES: I don't think it's magic touch. It's luck. The guys make you look good sometimes -- all the time, honestly, as coaches. I was a player. The players play, and they're the ones that make all the coaches look great.

And I just try to slow the game down sometimes in a certain situation. There may be a situation like that where I have a hunch of what pitch he's going to get and we may or may not sit on that pitch or just an approach thing.

But Gavin, you don't need to have -- it might be my second trip ever with him. He's a veteran. And sometimes I don't want to say anything to him because he's so good in those big moments.

But those guys, they make you look good and they can make you look good when you take those pitching trips. We actually track the pitching trips. And if it's good, we call it a QVP -- QMP, quality mound visit -- QMV, sorry. But you know, I think some of it is luck. They make me look good.

Q. Building off the question about Tyler Howe. What have you seen from him, and what does it say about him to kind of recover from that tricky fly ball in the third and then get things going in the seventh to start the two-run inning?

SCOTT FORBES: That's tough. That sun is tough. Shadows are tough. We were talking about telling our guys, hang in there, the shadows are tough, it's going to be hard to hit. But that's why he's been able to play every day as a freshman. He's steady. He's an old-school baseball player. He can play all over the field. He's not intimidated.

And we talk about the next-play mentality all the time, and you have to have a really short memory in sports and move on to the next pitch, good or bad. And our guys have completely bought into that.

But, man, you know, he's been really good for us and really helped our lineup being a left-handed hitter that can play all over.

Q. Rabe got this lineup I think a 11-0-2 or 1-2 count, and then your lineup was able to extend those counts and extend those at-bats. Cooper's able to turn two of those into walks. What does that say about the versatility of this lineup at the plate?

SCOTT FORBES: I was just hoping we could get his pitch count up, to get him out of there, because I thought his stuff was electric. And I was like, man, if he's on, this is going to be a tough day if he goes into the eighth inning.

Again, Cooper Nicholson having that great at-bat was huge. So really, it was just reminding our guys, don't look at that scoreboard, just try to battle as much as you can, try to find a way to get on base, and don't let him have quick innings. That's the goal. Don't let him get in too much of a

rhythm.

And we also knew with that type of arm, we're going to strike out some. And we saw that early. But I thought our guys, as he -- getting his pitch count up and instead of it being 96, 98 -- he might have even touched 99, it was a little bit lower -- and that gave us a better shot on his fastball.

Q. She sort of stole my question, so I'll ask it in a different way and maybe get a different answer. When you're facing a guy like Rabe -- and he certainly looked electric -- what's the approach going into it? You know if he's like that, you want to get his pitch count up, but also you've got to be aggressive because you may only get one pitch to handle.

SCOTT FORBES: I feel like we were not on the fastball as well as we needed to be. And that's something we can control. Everything, most of the time, unless you just sit on a single pitch, works off that fastball, especially a guy with a power arm. We were reminding our guys, hey, let's try to get back to being a little bit shorter. We were late, and he was beating us with fastballs.

So really, that was the goal the whole time, is let's just try to be on the fastball, work off those machines all the time. Those things, you can crank it up to 100 miles an hour, but sometimes when you know a guy has that much, you get a little bit antsy and you get big. So I thought we were pretty big early. And we shortened that up. I felt like we walked more, and we just had better quality at-bats.

Q. You heard Colin Hynes say that they feel like they're never out of the fight. You have the dugout meeting after DeCaro gets out of the sixth. What is it about this team that allows them to find the mental toughness they need when maybe they're trailing the game late, like against USC last weekend and against Ole Miss tonight?

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, I mean, they made the choice, August 17th. We go hard here. And our program has high standards. We have great culture. But you've got to work. And the guys understand, if you don't work, you're not going to make it. But then when you choose to work and you're disciplined, you reap the benefits.

And these guys, you just look at their bodies, they've stayed in the weight room. They'll work at practice tomorrow. It will be short. It will be intense. But when a team decides that they're going to do certain things and make certain decisions, they have the confidence. We talk about preparation all the time, and I like to talk about different stories, just remind the guys, like Michael Jordan

says, there's no fear when you're prepared. The little birdie questioning things is when you don't put in the work -- but when you put in the work, the game comes, and you go out and play free and easy. And I feel like this group, for sure, puts in the work.

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