

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Saturday, June 13, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Alabama Crimson Tide

Coach Rob Vaughn

John Lemm

Tyler Fay

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma - 9, Alabama - 0

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Alabama coach Rob Vaughn and student-athletes Tyler Fay and John Lemm.

ROB VAUGHN: Hat tip to Oklahoma. They played great today. We said it before. This was two teams playing really good baseball right now, who was going to execute better. You gotta tip your cap. They got a big two out hitter on a cutter that just kind of stayed up, and big two-out hit there in the first.

And Cord was good today, just really good. We just really struggled getting on time with his heater. We knew how good the fastball was, the extension is really good on it, so 95, 96 plays even firmer. We just couldn't quite get on time today. Felt like we weren't consistently on time.

Missed what you think are really good pitches to hit but sometimes that happens with stuff.

Tough one for us today, but, man, all these kids have done all year is respond. When they got punched in the mouth they've respond. And we get an opportunity to do it on Monday against another darned good team. We'll figure out tonight who that is. Get some rest tonight, recover, get a little bit of work in tomorrow and come out and throw our punch again on Monday.

**Q. John, could you speak from a hitter's perspective how difficult it was to handle Rager today?**

JOHN LEMM: As a lefty it's a little different. So I can't really speak from the righties. From the lefty's perspective he throws from the far first base, like, first base side of the rubber. So obviously it's coming across us, so it looks like

it's cutting but it's straight.

The guys kept on coming to the dugout, myself included, it wasn't straight. And the sweeper, it starts behind you. It's just two really good pitches in the zone that he commanded. For the are righties he obviously also has a cutter and a changeup. So didn't get to see those two.

But just from the lefty's perspective, that's the two that I could see. But, yeah, that's probably about it.

**Q. Tyler, your thoughts on the way Oklahoma was able to hit today and your performance?**

TYLER FAY: It was kind of a disappointing outing for me. Didn't really have the slider working at all. But they had a lot of really tough ABs early in the game and kind of just got some momentum built up. And they did a good job hitting everything.

**Q. Tyler, to follow up on that, what did you think of your stuff in warmups before the game? Was the slider there at that time?**

TYLER FAY: Yeah, in the pen pregame everything was really working. I was dotting up everything, keeping everything low. Slider felt good there. Just on the mound, everything felt pretty good for the most part, other than the slider.

**Q. Tyler, what was the 15 minutes maybe before the game, we've been talking all week about coming home and being from Nebraska, what was that like?**

TYLER FAY: Yeah, it was really exciting. There was a lot of people here. Lots of families scattered throughout the stands. Yeah, I was really excited to go into the game. And it was a cool atmosphere, for sure.

**Q. Tyler, what were the nerves like leading up to the first pitch? How do you think you were able to manage those?**

TYLER FAY: I think this morning I was more nervous than I was leading up to first pitch. I think it was just kind of like



being in that waiting mode and not really having any control over the timing of everything. But once I started to get going I felt pretty normal. Felt like a normal pregame.

**Q. It seemed like a big turning point in the game, bottom of the fifth, you've got John and Eric on. Brennan shows the bunt. Was there any thought of him having him bunt even down in the count 1-2?**

ROB VAUGHN: Yeah, a little bit. Obviously, it's like John said, that's -- I know bunting looks easy, but with that stuff, it's pretty tough. Just felt at that point Tyler had done a great job of minimizing things. I know he gave up the two-out hit in the first. But you're sitting there, first and second later in the game, and gets a double play ball to minimize things.

So just felt like for us, right, like it's our first time here in a while, for these guys that hadn't strung a lot together off Cord. Just felt like pushing one across was going to be big there. To be honest with you, I almost did the opposite. I almost took it off 1-1 because I felt like he was going to get his heater. And he did.

But, yeah, just no second-guessing that. That's how we've done it all year. I'm not going to ask these guys to do something I haven't asked them to do all year. Just one of those situations that was a big turning point because it's the combination of that and the hit-by-pitch homer takes you to a 3-0 game to a 5-0 game. And with the way Cord was throwing, that obviously lengthens out and makes it tough on you.

But, yeah, no doubt, turning point of the game for sure. But at the end of the day, kind of went with what we thought was best in the moment. Just didn't work for us.

**Q. Does this look like a totally different team from the Oklahoma team you played in the regular season? And your impressions of Lachance, what he did hobbling around on one leg?**

ROB VAUGHN: He went full Kirk Gibson on us, didn't he? My goodness. You talk about a second-half turnaround. That guy was allergic to a slider a month and a half ago. I don't want to say it was an easy out by any means, but you get him to chase and do a lot of that.

I think that's indicative of their whole team. I mean, Walk's at-bats to start off the game kind of set the tone. T-Fay gets them in a good count, executes some pitches and spoil, spoil, spoil. Gets above 96 and dumps it into center with a good at-bat.

You know, T-Fay didn't have his best stuff today. When

he's really good he's down. But what he did he did a great job of like he does every outing is just minimizing. It's what he did, man. He minimized innings where things could have gotten out of hand. He just continued to minimize and give us a chance.

So Lachance might have had the best second half I've ever seen in college baseball. And man as a team they've just done a good job. They're playing really good baseball right now. And it was going to take a two-out hit and they kind of got that early and let them breathe and got to playing good. And I think it took us four or five innings to get our first hit right there.

So for them they kind of played a little bit more comfortable with the at-bat Walk had to start the game then on, and then obviously the big two out hit -- I think it was Gambill that got a cutter that just stayed out over the plate. With the way Rager was throwing, it just made it tough. But, yeah, Lachance, pretty impressed with what he did today.

**Q. We've talked a lot this year about how tough your team is and how much they get off the mat and get ready to punch back. Anything you guys do differently here with the whole day off in the between games?**

ROB VAUGHN: Yeah, we'll see. It's one of those things where it's kind of all hands on deck. Which is great. And so what these kids have done all year. From the first game of the year we got punched in the mouth and lost and they responded. We got swept at Kentucky and they responded.

And I've said this for years, that's the mark of a man. Can you get back off the mat? And we just got beat today. And this was not a game we went out there and walked 20 guys. This is not a game -- Mark's in here, he's seen us kick the ball all around the field at times. We didn't do that today.

We just got flat out beat. They executed pitches on the mound better. They got some big hits in big spots. They kind of were relentless with two outs, lengthening it out there at the end of the game. It's one of those games you weren't going to clearly go back and see what we need to do better come Monday. But, man, we got 24 hours. We'll go get some work in tomorrow and get back in the saddle.

And I can promise you you'll get a good punch from these kids. These kids ain't quit their whole life. It's a group of dudes that are tough and a group of guys that just keep showing up and keep playing hard and we got beat today. So we can acknowledge that and we can move on it from it? We'll see. But I'm excited to toe the rubber with these guys again on Monday.

**Q. You previously touched on just getting beat flat out and also Deiten Lachance a little bit earlier. In combat sports, when you got like a wounded warrior that you're up against, sometimes the scouting report has to go out the window because their approach changes too. What was the mentality facing him? And then just up and down the order, everybody was tallying hits for them.**

ROB VAUGHN: I mean, I think with Lachance, the biggest key is you've just got to be able to get the ball in on him. When he gets his arms extended, it is scary. And he was able to get his arms extended on a slider to just to be away for chase, and he kind of stayed middle and he got it?

But you saw like Mitchell at the end was able to crowd him a little bit. That's how you gotta get good hitters out. I say all the time, you get bad hitters out by throwing stuff away. And you get good hitters out by stuffing them in. And that's how you get Lachance.

That was just scary, because if you miss, that ball is going to hit rockos or something, he's going to hit it a long, long way. Just dangerous hitter. Dangerous hitter. You've got to crowd them, move pitches, move stuff down and in on his hands and we were able to do that a handful of times. We got a big double play out of him early. And obviously when he gets his arms extended, man, that's a dangerous hitter.

**Q. In the middle of the game, and a tough one like that, are you talking your team through it? Are you thinking game planning changing in the middle of the game, strategy-wise, to prepare for the next game? What are your thoughts while it's going on?**

ROB VAUGHN: Yeah, a little bit different here because you do have some off-days. I think that's the difference. If you're playing in Hoover and you're turning around and playing again 12 hours later, you know, you've got to be a little bit smarter with some things. Obviously we want to stay on the right side of the bracket.

I still felt, 5-0, I still felt okay. I really did. Our kids responded to that. I thought, if we could get Cord out of the stretch. -- the stuff was good all day, but felt like we had some better -- his stuff wasn't quite as dangerous out of the stretch.

We were single, double, double, away from being right back in that game and grabbing some of that momentum back for us.

All year, we've had times we didn't execute the bunt.

Seemed like when we didn't, the next guy got the big hit.

Today it was a double play ball ground-out. We weren't able to do that and kind of get back on the board. My big message to those guys the whole time was just stay off the scoreboard.

When we play a brand of baseball, go play the brand. And if it's good enough today, it's good enough. If it's not, it's not. And that's way easier said than done. That's way easier with me saying that over there and it's like you're in 9-0 game and they didn't bring in a thumber there at the end.

And Mercurius is rolling in at 98 with stuff. And since they moved that guy back to the bullpen, it's been pretty darned good. You look up and down that lineup of arms, they don't have a lot of thumbers down there. It's some real, real stuff.

So you knew you kind of had an uphill battle there. But felt like this is college baseball. Crazy things happen all the time. Momentum is such a big part of this game. We just weren't able to kind of swing the momentum in our direction.

I really felt in those middle innings, if we could swing it back our way, we had enough to kind of control that offense. We just couldn't grab it back.

**Q. With Rager, a lot of times freshmen, at least anecdotally, it seems like they hit the wall late in the year. He has seemed to get better down the stretch. I mean, when you've seen that, what goes into a guy kind of making a jump late?**

ROB VAUGHN: Obviously he kind of missed some time there in the middle. We didn't see him when we went to our place. And it felt like you kind of saw that show up for our guys a little bit.

Second time seeing Fay, and as good as Fay's stuff was, it wasn't quite as sharp as it was when we played them in Norman here a month and a half, two months ago.

And I really felt like after the first time through the order, we can make that adjustment to the heater. I really thought we would. And I think it speaks to it. I watched that guy one-hit Kansas last weekend. And he just has continued to get better.

There's a reason that guy's pitching with Team USA. There's a reason that guy is going to be a problem in this league. It's a lefty -- there was a boatload of strikes too. It's not free stuff.

He pounds the strike zone. It's electric stuff and you're going to have to go hit him to beat him. And when you start giving that guy a cushion with that heater, it gets tough. And he threw just enough sliders, busted out a couple change-ups to Hines. I think he only threw a handful of change-ups but threw some good ones to Hines that got him off time with that heater.

Hines kind of started timing it up a little bit. Even his first at-bat, he missed a couple. But as the at-bat went, he saw him timing it up, timing it up, timing it up and then he did a good job of mixing the changeup on him, kind of that third at-bat. That's a good arm. That's a good arm.

Skip's one of the best pitching guys in the country. I mean, from the days back at Texas to his time at Oklahoma, elite job with pitchers.

Man, just great job out of him today. I thought he was awesome. I thought he was awesome. And like I said, baseball's such a momentum game. And we just weren't able to kind of swing any in our direction today.

And he just kind of kept his foot on the gas. When you start getting down big in the middle against arms like that, you're going to need some help. You're going to need an error. You're going to need a walk. You're going to need a hit-by-pitch. You're going to need some help to come back 6-7 off an arm like that.

And you gotta credit him for just continuing to come. So great job on his part. Great job by their team. I thought they were relentless offensively.

You talk about getting us on the mat, they kind of got us on the mat and didn't let us up. And that's a sign of a really good team. A sign of a really tough team. So obviously it's going to be a heck of a game tonight with Texas and Georgia. We'll be watching. We'll figure out who we play and show up at whatever time.

I don't know what time we go on Monday, but whatever time we go on Monday, these boys will be ready to go. They're going to give them their best punch, and I'm excited to get back on the field with them.

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