

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Sunday, June 14, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**North Carolina Tar Heels**

**Coach Scott Forbes**

**Walker McDuffie**

**Gavin Gallaher**

Postgame Press Conference

North Carolina - 5, West Virginia - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by North Carolina head coach Scott Forbes and student-athletes Gavin Gallaher and Walker McDuffie.

SCOTT FORBES: Sorry, my voice is a little hoarse. What an atmosphere. This is such a special place. I was just thinking about that the whole game. The seats were full. Beautiful night. Just so thankful for that.

We talk about it's an honor and a privilege to wear the Carolina uniform, but it's also an honor and a privilege to be here playing in the College World Series. And everybody does such an unbelievable job. It's such a special place.

Great game. Two really good teams. West Virginia is tough to defend against. They're dynamic in a lot of ways offensively.

I thought Yehl, he settled in. We got two early, but he was on. So we were just battling. And credit to our pitchers. I thought Ryan Lynch, I think he got two double plays. I know they had first and third and nobody out. That was a huge double play in my opinion.

McDuffie, first time pitching in Omaha, he was pretty good. Big swing at the bat by this guy beside me right here, Mr. Clutch. And, again, Caden Glauber coming in there and putting out that fire.

So great win for us. We have to regroup quickly. We have to be process-oriented. We've got to move on and get ready to get back to work tomorrow to be ready to play well on Wednesday.



**Q. Gavin, your coach preaches slow heartbeat. You guys come up clutch in pressure times. Just educate us on how you get to that zone late?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: I just try to keep everything the same, stick with the routine and trust my preparation. That's what can really keep you grounded. And it also helps having him down at third base, just to look down there and he's always got a smile on his face. Kind of takes a little bit of weight off your shoulders.

But just in there trying to have a good team at-bat.

**Q. Gavin, you've been clutch a lot in your career. What does it mean to be able to wear the C on your chest like that and be able to come through for your teammates in the biggest situations?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: Yeah, it's an honor and a privilege to have these guys trust me enough to allow me to wear this as long as -- as well as the coaching staff. So, yeah, it means a lot to me. It means a ton.

These guys know that I have their back and you know whatever they need, and I'm lucky enough that they have mine. So when up there at the plate it makes it easy on me. We know that everybody on this team is bought in and we can trust each other. So it makes it easy when you go up there, just try to do your job.

**Q. Gavin, after your at-bat in the fifth, you walked up the tunnel for about 10 seconds. What did you tell yourself in that moment? Did you say something to yourself?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: You all aren't supposed to know about that. No, I mean, just sometimes you need a little reset. I think we all feel that way. So that's pretty much all it was. I walked up the tunnel. Ended up running into three of our coaches, gave them a smile and turned around and walked back. Not much.

**Q. Walker, two years ago you were in the stands for the regionals watching these guys advance and then**



**ultimately beating West Virginia in the supers. Now you're here pitching against West Virginia in the College World Series. Just talk to me about that full-circle moment for you?**

WALKER MCDUFFIE: Like you said, it's a full-circle moment. And when you're in the stands as a fan and you're committed here, all you think about is wanting that to be you and helping the team win. I'm lucky enough and grateful enough for Coach Forbes to put me out there to make it happen.

**Q. You hadn't pitched in a week, and a couple of your last three outings maybe were not like what you would have liked. Did you feel like you had the rhythm right off the bat when you came out there?**

WALKER MCDUFFIE: Yeah, I mean, you have to flush it. Those last few outings, yeah, they weren't great. But it's not going to determine how I pitch in this next outing because I can't carry that in there.

Those outings right there, if anything, they prepare me for today because we take failure as a learning opportunity, and all it did was make me better.

**Q. Gavin, whether it was you or someone else in that spot, West Virginia's not a team that makes a ton of mistakes, so how big was it to make those errors in that inning hurt?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: Yeah, we preach defense and pitching here at UNC. We know how important that is, especially when you're playing in Omaha on the biggest stage. So when other teams make those mistakes, it's important that you capitalize, because, you know, when you get to this point in the season, you're not going to get many chances like that. Fortunately, they did make those mistakes and we capitalized.

**Q. Walker, we've talked about the love/hate relationship you sometimes have with your slider. How was that a weapon for you tonight?**

WALKER MCDUFFIE: I just didn't overthink it. I think at times I try to make it move too much. And I think just simplifying it and working on the little things like doing belt work or something in the back, those little things are what adds up and helps that slider stay more consistent.

**Q. Gavin and Walker, you guys are both from North Carolina. How meaningful is it to run out on that diamond, see all the Carolina fans who have made the trip here -- the farthest trip for any fan base here at the College World Series -- what does it mean to have that**

**fan support?**

WALKER MCDUFFIE: Yeah, it means the world. This is why you come to UNC because you play in the biggest games and you have the best fans. So, I mean, it's what you dream for and it's what you live for. So we take full advantage of it.

GAVIN GALLAHER: And to that point, I think now's a good time to thank them for everything they do for us. They're awesome at the Bosh. They show out weekend after weekend. Especially in the postseason, they're awesome.

And also families. This is a tough trip to make. It's not cheap. And our families, they sacrifice a lot to get here and support us. So really appreciate that and thank them as well.

**Q. He talked about family, Walker talked about family, you always talk about family. Your own, plus a bunch of those other six boys were there above the dugout late. Talk about that emotion.**

SCOTT FORBES: It's unbelievable. They are family. If you're a transformational coach or trying to be -- it doesn't mean we're perfect -- it seems like they become an even closer family.

And that's something that's so important to us at UNC that the players feel that. We use the word "love" all the time as the backbone of our program. I explain to our guys, there's some tough love in there, but it's the strongest thing on the planet.

But, also, like Gavin said, the effort and having your own family out here -- baseball has been such a blessing, and it brings so many people together.

So I just joke all the time. I don't know how many family members we've got out here with my family. We call them the Griswolds sometimes because it's a lot of fun. But thankfulness is what I think about with the families.

**Q. You talked about Ryan Lynch. I know you mentioned him in your opening statement. But feels like he went out there and gritted out 4.2 innings there and did a job to get you to McDuffie and then Glauber. How important is he? I think his postseason ERA is sub-3.00 now, and he's been very good over 30 innings. Talk to me about his performance today and how he did his job to kind of bridge that gap.**

SCOTT FORBES: Your starter, anytime, the more length they give you, the better the chances, especially when you really like your bullpen, like we do. And that's what you



have to have to win championships.

And both those guys, we feel like we got 1-A and 1-A the whole season. His slider wasn't as on as it was the last two outings, but he still battled. You said it was just a gritty performance. His stuff is so nasty, and it plays up. You know he can get out of an inning, especially getting a double-play ball. And that's a credit to our infield. They make those plays behind him.

But big pitchers or clutch pitchers make clutch pitches in big situations. And I told him that I thought that was the biggest pitch of the game. The momentum had shifted a little bit, in my opinion. And they had first and third with no outs. And then, boom, just like that, they only get one run. It's 2-2. And we get back in the dugout. So that was huge for us, for him to almost get to the fifth.

**Q. I think across two games here, every inning you've scored, the lead-off man has reached. How important is it to kind of generate that early traffic on the base paths and give yourself an opportunity to plate someone?**

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, I've been saying it over and over in my head: We need to get the lead-off going; we just haven't done it a lot.

But it gives you momentum. Our guys are good base runners. We have some good distributed throughout the lineup. Gives you an opportunity to possibly bunt and put more pressure.

And it's not like we're not trying to get the lead-off going. It's one of those things I probably shouldn't talk about to the hitters because I don't want to jinx it. But we would like to do that more, I can tell you that.

**Q. Whether it's a double-play ball or putting pressure on the defense, how do you describe this team's ability to continue to thrive in these pressure-packed moments, whether it's at the plate or on the mound or in the field?**

SCOTT FORBES: We like to think that we try to make practice harder than the game. I think that's important. This time of year, even though it's short, like yesterday, we had the machine cranked up and it was throwing cheese. You've got to be ready to get in there and compete.

We always preach to our players, as coaches, we're going to try to make practice as difficult as possible. Buy into it. Understand how important practice is. Trust us, we're not going to go out there and practice four hours this time of year.

But it's that preparation thing. It gets rid of that little birdie doubting yourself, if you've done something really hard over and over and over -- it's like fundamental defense. Our guys know, like, you're going to do it every single day that we practice because that's just what we're going to do. And so understand how important that is.

And this group, credit to them, they've bought into it. And they'll come tomorrow, whatever I have on the practice plan, whether or not it's just a lift, they'll do it and they'll do it at a high level.

**Q. As the head coach of North Carolina, you know the program's pedigree but you also know the history. You're currently 2-0. You don't play again until Wednesday. How difficult is it to sit in the driver's seat and have your hands firmly on the steering wheel?**

SCOTT FORBES: I mean, I believe in honesty. It feels great. I mean obviously we want to prepare and play well on Wednesday.

But my first year back here as pitching coach in 2006, I wasn't in here. Coach Fox was in here after a Robert Woodard complete game at Clemson. But we haven't won that second game since then.

So obviously it feels great to win that game. I'm glad that I've been in that position. Maybe that can help me prepare and make sure that our guys don't get too comfortable and understand that, hey, our goal is just to play really well on Wednesday. But I think I'll sleep pretty good tonight after going 2-0, that's for sure.

**Q. How have you seen Walker grow these past few weeks of just being thrown into the fire and going through postseason baseball?**

SCOTT FORBES: We had heart break last year. He was part of that heart break. He didn't pitch as well as he wanted to pitch, obviously. Walker's from -- he doesn't say he's from my hometown, but he is. He's from Broadway. I'm from Sanford.

I know the character that he has. I know how bad that hurts. Matter of fact, when I was leaving the stadium, after we lost to Arizona, I pulled up to the stoplight right by the hospital and looked over to my right after we lost that game three and I saw Walker McDuffie and we just kind of looked at each other.

We talked about that the other day, how those things make you better. And he's worked his tail off to be more of a complete pitcher. He didn't have the change-up last year.

It's allowed him to be one of our MVPs. What him and Caden Glauber have done, they're such weapons. And when you know the character of the kid, too, it makes it even better.

**Q. Talk about the poise for a guy who should be a senior in high school coming in. He's got the tying run at the plate and gets two strikeouts. Did you have any notion of bringing somebody else in, or was that Glaub's to finish?**

SCOTT FORBES: Zero thought of anybody else except Caden Glauber. I thought McDuffie was really pitching well, too, and he had all three pitches working.

But I knew in my mind, okay if we get to a certain point, I'm going to probably make a change. We liked the match-up with McDuffie.

It's easy for me as the head coach to want to go to Glaub quicker sometimes. And Coach Gaines we met today -- we always meet before the game -- and he felt really strongly that Walker McDuffie was a really good match-up against them.

But when you get to that point and you've seen enough hitters, you want to bring in one of your best guys who can recover and has that fastball. Man, he's fun to watch, isn't he? I'm just glad he's not -- for any future kids that we try to get to do that, it's probably a good idea just come a year early. (Laughter).

**Q. Yehl got ahead early and often. He used his hammer curve and then his power slider. How did you see this lineup just keep grinding out those at-bats?**

SCOTT FORBES: Back to that first inning, I thought Cooper Nicholson -- he's been locked in; he doesn't have a lot to show for it -- but him moving the ball and us getting another run was huge, in my opinion, and going up 2-0 instead of 1-0.

But he's good. I mean, we knew he was good. And you're seeing it out here. You look at Georgia's starter last night. We faced him last year at Stanford. If a pitcher's on you've got to match him. That's basically what I was thinking. We can't give up runs right here because he's just a tough at-bat. Maybe we can get him out of there. Maybe they'll make a mistake and somebody will juice one. That's what Gavin did.

But I thought he was really good. For a lefty without a change-up, it's unusual that he's that dominant against right-handed hitters. But our righties really had trouble with him. Our lefties were a little bit better. But man, he was

good. And he got on quick after that first inning.

**Q. It seems like every day Gavin earns a new nickname. What's it like when he comes up to bat and more times than not you know that he's going to come up clutch for you guys?**

SCOTT FORBES: Gavin Gallaher is the definition of a baseball player -- old school, can play all over the field, doesn't care where he plays. He played two years at third. Tough position to learn. Moved over to second, our middle infield. He's been outstanding.

We had him and Jake Schaffner at shortstop pretty much the whole fall. I told him he was playing second. He don't care. He just wants to win.

Raised the right way. His dad played at Wake Forest. Phenomenal family. And I don't know if Adam Lucas is in here, but Adam Lucas called me when he was young, Gavin Gallaher, and said, hey, this kid plays with Asher. And he's a really good baseball player. And the next thing you know, we're offering him. And so I always tell Adam Lucas, that was a good recruit for you.

**Q. Colin Hynek starting a rally again in the sixth. He reached on that error. I know he got forced out at second. But he also had the caught stealing of Guzman at third base in the early innings. Felt like a big play in that game and obviously the error led to the three runs. What can you say about his performance tonight?**

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, Colin, he's level-headed. He's been so good. It's been tough on Macon. Shout out to Macon Winslow. He's been playing, fighting that wrist that he got hit against High Point. I don't think a lot of kids would play. That's my kind of guy, that's, like, hey, I'm going to play and help my team win.

And there's no doubt something really good's going to happen for Macon Winslow moving forward. Hynek has been outstanding. He has got some clutch in him and he knows how to make a big play offensively and defensively, and that was a huge play. I'd forgotten about that. I should have brought that up.

I was hoping -- I couldn't tell if he was safe or not. I was just glad that they decided he was out. But that was a really good throw by Colin Hynek.

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