

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Monday, June 15, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Alabama Crimson Tide**

**Coach Rob Vaughn**

**Jason Torres**

**Hagan Banks**

Postgame Press Conference



Texas - 14, Alabama - 2

**THE MODERATOR:** We're joined by Alabama head coach Rob Vaughn and student-athletes Jason Torres and Hagan Banks.

**ROB VAUGHN:** It's one of those things, it can be equal parts disappointed in the last couple of games and at the same time overly proud of what this group has done.

We see this all over. If you come Tuscaloosa you see signs that say where legends are made, and these guys did that. These guys, there's a group of dudes sitting here, obviously two next to me, and a team that revitalized baseball in Tuscaloosa. They've got 7,500 people out to a game last week, to see them do something that hadn't been done in 27 years. Proud of obviously the effort, proud of the year.

Everybody is hurting. Everybody that doesn't hold that throw at the very end is hurting. But at the end of the day I go back to why we do this. And we do it for the two dudes sitting next to me. We do it for the locker room full of dudes that are hurting in there because the journey that this group went on this year was damn special, was really special.

I'm fortunate to get to be a part of it. They took me along for a heck of a ride. So forever indebted to the 2026 Alabama baseball team. And I challenge those young pups out there. The foundation's been late. It's their job to get us back. It's their job to get us back. It ain't going to be 27 years again, I can promise you that. So really grateful for this group.

**Q. Hagan, you've been with Alabama almost your**

**entire college career, and this program was in a very different spot a couple of years ago. You've kind of rode the lows and now the highs. What does it mean for you to toe the rubber in the College World Series? And what have you seen out of the coaching staff and the players on this team that got here?**

**HAGAN BANKS:** It means everything to me, especially having my family here. It's kind of a long ways from north Georgia, but when these coaches came in back in 2023 and 2024, it was pretty easy to accept that and come back to the team and get back to here after 27 years or however long it is.

But it means everything to me. The town of Tuscaloosa has meant everything to me and my family. And they've given me everything and more, and I couldn't be more grateful.

**Q. What did you think of the energy when you guys were warming up and everything like that pregame, if it differed at all or if it was just business as normal?**

**JASON TORRES:** We knew our season was kind of on the line. So we kind of had to bring the most energy we've had all year. We were trying to keep playing baseball here, so that's what we're trying to do. Didn't go out in the first few innings how we wanted to, but I feel like the energy was going good into the game.

**HAGAN BANKS:** I know the guys didn't show it and we obviously didn't show what Alabama baseball was as far as being tough and that nature of the game. But I know those guys in the locker room are hurting, but those guys that are coming back has got a lot more to give and, like Coach Vaughn, said they'll be back on the stage here.

**Q. Jason, you spent a couple of years playing next to really special player in Bronny. What has he meant to the program his leadership and what has that experience been like?**

**JASON TORRES:** Ever since I've been here, I feel like he kind of is the program. I don't want to say that, but we just all kind of follow his lead. That guy's special -- in practice,



in the games, good person, good teammate. I'll miss playing with him honestly. He's been making my life real easy on the left side of the infield too. I don't really have to move much. But, yeah, I'm going to miss that guy.

**Q. Coach, we talked in the fall and you were very specific in the wording, you said this team is special. Keep an eye out, we're going to make some noise. We're probably going to get to the World Series. How do you feel about this team right now?**

ROB VAUGHN: Man I don't remember saying that, but it's pretty smart on my part.

It just has meant everything to me and my family. Guys that took a chance on us three years ago, guys like Hagan Banks, guys like Justin Lebron -- I told Bronny at the end of this thing -- phew, I told myself I wasn't going to do this -- that guy making a decision to stay when nobody else in college baseball would have is what's changed the trajectory of Alabama baseball, both for the short term and the long term.

So his family, his brother, man, I gave his brother the biggest hug afterwards. What a special kid.

Just knew this group had a chance to be special. But there's a heck of a lot of difference in a chance to be special and going out and doing something that hasn't been done in 27 years. Takes a lot of toughness. Takes a lot of -- one of the first lessons they have to hear from me is we talk about the man in the arena. And man it's not the critic who counts. The credit belongs to the dude that steps out in the arena that's unafraid to crash and burn.

This group lived that. They went through some hard times. They went through some elite times. And, golly, they reenergized baseball in Tuscaloosa. That's what was so fun to see is how a town rallied around these kids.

And we'll be back. We'll be back because of guys like Bron and Torres and Banks and Fay and Brady Neal and those guys -- Bryce Fowler. I can go up and down the line -- Matt Heiberger. Those guys laid the foundation of what this place means.

And I looked at Eric Hines right in the eye at the end and said, now it's your job to get us back. Chase Kroberger, Caleb Barnett, some special guys -- Joey Chiarodo, some young freshmen that you might not have seen a lot of -- obviously Upchurch got a lot of accolades and it's very well deserved.

There's a talented group of dudes in there that felt it, that they have been a part of this. And I can promise you they'll

come back in August ready to go.

**Q. Obviously, this is your first time been here. Having been through it now and finished, looking back over the last few days, is there anything you would do differently if you came back in terms of approach or preparation or anything of that nature?**

ROB VAUGHN: We'd score more runs, I hope. I think that's the biggest piece. I talked to a lot of people leading up to this. I always talk about how the town of Omaha embraces this is unlike anything I've ever seen. It is such a cool event. I can't imagine any of the other championships being more well run or more, just embraced by a town than this one is.

Now, there's a lot. There's a lot. It's the world of -- it felt like the first three or four days here, we were either doing media or we were on the phone with kids and recruiting, and there's a lot of moving parts.

I looked at my wife a couple days ago and I said, babe, I don't think I've enjoyed one second of being here yet. So I had to take a minute yesterday, and I just took my son to lunch, took Wyatt to lunch. He's nine.

That poor dude, he's the one that gets me. That dude was in tears at the end because of what these kids mean to him and how they treat him. So, so cool. And just took a minute to take him yesterday and go spend an hour with him in Omaha, getting to do something that every coach dreams of, every little kid dreams of.

And so, yeah, I don't think I would do anything different. I thought we were in a position to where we had fought like crap to get here. We fought so hard to kick that door down. And we just didn't play our best baseball the last two games, just bottom line. We weren't as good offensively as we had been.

Our two guys that had just been nails for us all year just ran into some good lineups. You've got the best eight teams in the country and eight hottest teams in the country. You can argue there's a couple of teams that are probably good enough to be here that are sitting at home right now. So nothing I would have changed. Nothing I would have changed. Just probably embraced this a little bit more. I would have probably enjoyed the moment a little bit more.

And every dude I talked to warned me about that. But you just put your head down and you're trying to get a job done. And unfortunately came up a little short. But what a ride.

**Q. Going off that last question, because that's something I had written down, is there anything that**

**maybe you learned to game plan-wise, because you came into previous pressers and almost read entire scouting reports to us. So we knew you were pretty prepped. But did you learn anything in between the lines when the action was going on?**

ROB VAUGHN: Yeah, I mean, it's still a baseball game, right? The gaps are bigger. We kind of had a ball in the left center that we kind of got tied up on that was kind of a little bit of a gut punch there.

So gaps are bigger. And so I think -- I've played here a thousand times. I probably 20 games in this field in the Big Ten Tournament and stuff. So nothing crazy from that perspective.

I think it just boils down, when you have these teams, it's not even about who's better, it's about who can execute in those moments, who can get it done in those moments. And it's messy. It's baseball. None of us coaches want to admit that.

Texas, those guys had some relentless at-bats off Zaner, but it doesn't matter. You still got to have some balls go your way. And they kind of get on the board in the first on two balls that weren't hit overly hard, were just hit in the right spot.

Then you credit them, they kind of kept coming and kept making Zane work, and there was nothing easy there. But they got some balls that bounced their way early, and then we didn't execute in some areas where we could have probably shrunk the gap a little bit and just couldn't quite get it done, couldn't quite get that big hit. But nothing new I learned there. It's just still baseball. You're doing it in front of 24,000 people in the cathedral of college baseball, which was a heck of a lot of fun.

But I didn't feel like the moment was too big for our guys. I didn't feel like they felt sped up. I didn't feel like they felt nervous or scared of the moment. I just didn't think we were good enough.

We ran into two really good teams, and we just weren't good enough to beat them with the way we played and the way they played. So nothing crazy there, but good time here. Wish we could have stayed longer.

**Q. You said the other day that you guys got beat but you were at least clean didn't have many errors. There were a few lapses today. Focus, was that an issue at all? Or was that fly ball into left that dropped, that was pretty big.**

ROB VAUGHN: Yeah, not focus at all. Me and Mark have

joked about this for years. I kept telling him all year, I kept telling them like don't start complimenting the Tide now.

But that's a big thing we gotta address moving forward. We gave guys way too many outs throughout the course of this year and somehow still found a way to win a lot of those games.

But what you don't want to talk about, you got Bryce Fowler playing with a 102-degree fever right now. Like, that guy feels like death. He's been in bed the last three days trying to get healthy and just was sending it.

And that ball just kind of tailing away from him and he thought Eric had a better bead on it. They just didn't communicate, just lack of communication on that ball that fell.

Nothing to do with focus. It was not a -- they weren't nervous. They weren't lackadaisical. They weren't any of that. It just comes down to execution in those moments, and that's the man in the arena. Like, it's what we talk about all the time, it's hanging in my office. It's hanging on a note card on my desk.

These guys, it's one of the first meetings we have, it's, man, these guys, it says it, right, like, at the end of the triumph of high achievement, if they fail, at least they fail while daring greatly.

And this group did that man. They sent it. We just came up a little short.

**Q. Adrian Rodriguez had seven RBIs today and hit for the cycle. What were you trying to do to attack him and just what are your overall impressions?**

ROB VAUGHN: I think, it's been well documented, I think that guy is one of the big heartbeats of that team. He plays with a lot of energy. Obviously playing the biggest position on the field at shortstop. Kind of threw us for a loop. He hadn't taken a left-handed bat in a while. He stands in there, first one, and I was, like, okay, they're going to do safety. They're going to do something here. They certainly didn't.

Hats off to him. Great player. Up and down the lineup. Anthony Pack's going to be a problem in this league for a lot of years to come. That guy's incredible. Aiden Robbins, Carson Tinney, I mean you go and up/down this lineup it's as good as it gets. That's a really tough team, a really tough lineup.

I had a coach tell me years ago that obviously we wanted to be the ones holding the trophy at the end of this thing,

but those trophies gather dust a lot. It's about the relationships. It's about these kids. It's about them overachieving, getting to be a part of something bigger than themselves. And the 2026 Crimson Tide got to do that. They were all a part of something bigger.

It's well documented all year, I've said that, man, that the strength of this team is the team. And the sum of the parts is greater than the individual. And I think that's something that we've got a lot of dudes sitting on that roster going to be incredibly successful moving forward in life.

And man, I can't tell you how proud I am of them. I can't wait for 10 years down the road when we go honor this team. And I can't wait to come back and have these guys flying in from all over the country to come see us play here.

Hats off to Texas. Hats off to everybody left in this thing. There's some darned good teams left playing baseball right now.

We're grateful to have been here. It stings that we're going home this early. But, man, it is what it is. And as a coach, you're kind of on to the next thing, on to the next one. So we'll enjoy this group. And I'll remember this group for the rest of my career. So really grateful to be have been on the ride with them.

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