

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**North Carolina Tar Heels**

**Coach Scott Forbes**

**Gavin Gallaher**

**Jackson Rose**

**Owen Hull**

Postgame Press Conference



North Carolina - 12, West Virginia - 7

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by North Carolina head coach Scott Forbes and student-athletes Gavin Gallaher, Owen Hull and Jackson Rose.

SCOTT FORBES: I want to congratulate West Virginia. Heck of a team, heck of a run. Very well coached. They just play the game the right way. That's a credit to their coaching staff. They come at you a lot of ways -- a lot of speed, deep pitching staff. We really had to work in those two games to beat them.

I've been in their shoes. I know what that feels like. It's a stinker, but they've got a lot to be proud of. They should be extremely proud of how they represented their university.

Moving on, man, I thought Jackson Rose came in, silenced them pretty quick. I thought he was outstanding. We were joking before the game today, like, man, we need to have one of those games where we get 15 hits and score some runs. So thankfully that happened.

I thought our guys were ready. I felt like they were going after it. We talked about being in the moment, not counting outs and just playing like a Little Leaguer and having a blast doing so. And how can you not?

I mean, this is unbelievable. We're at the College World Series. We talk about it's an honor and a privilege to wear our uniform at the University of North Carolina, but it's also an honor and a privilege to be here playing on that field. And I want our guys to feel that. I want them to play with joy and have a blast playing together. So they did that.

And the fact that they did that, obviously we had one bad inning, but I don't care about that bad inning, I could care less.

We're playing in the national championship. And I'm excited for these guys. And I'll just keep jumping on their backs and watch them when we start playing on Saturday.

**Q. Gavin and Owen, can you talk about the lineup switch. It seemed to work out pretty well for both of you?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: I don't really know, to be honest with you. I think that it's a match-up thing. They had a righty start on the mound. But that's a question for him. He just does what he feels is right and today it worked out.

**Q. Jackson, tell us a little bit what it means to be able to go out there and toe the rubber for these guys and have a perfect defense behind you and how confident that makes you to go out there and pitch pitches?**

JACKSON ROSE: I mean, it's great being able to pitch out here as a freshman and be able to wear Carolina, it's like a dream to be honest.

And then playing with these guys in the field, you know if you get ahead, you don't have to worry about the defensive side. And it's awesome.

**Q. Owen and Gavin, you guys as a lineup today, as a whole, were raking, but especially at the top of the order. What was kind of your scouting report and game plan against both Chansen Cole and Ian Korn? That duo has been super tough for most teams throughout the year?**

OWEN HULL: Scouting report's a secret, but as a lineup as a whole we try to stick to the process of not letting our at-bats carry into each other.

The first thing that coach told us in our pregame meeting out in the outfield was that we want our compete factor at the top. And that's what we focused on and being default



aggressive. So those were the two things that we really focused on today, and I think it worked out pretty well.

**Q. Gavin you're a guy that's been here for three years. You've experienced the ups and downs that, you know, the postseason can bring. What does it mean to you to be able to play for a national championship come Saturday?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: I still think it really hasn't set in yet. After the game, shook hands and just kind of walking around, looking up in the stands, looking at my family, just kind of speechless, to be honest.

Yeah, we were here in '24, ran into two good teams, came close. And then last year, we're one inning away from being in Omaha again. So that really hurt.

So to be back here, win our first three games, be in the national championship, it's something that, I mean, it's truly amazing.

**Q. Jackson, you kind of -- you weren't getting a ton of playing time early on in the season but that Campbell game kind of put on you the map. Since then, you've been an integral part of the bullpen. What's that ride kind of been like, and getting to this moment, even though you haven't pitched in a hot second?**

JACKSON ROSE: I mean, all of us pitchers, we know it's one game away from getting our number called and getting an opportunity, like the Campbell game that I got. It's just going in every day, working as hard as I can, not letting the opportunity pass by. So that's it.

**Q. Gavin, what do you think are the lessons from that 2024 run that had you prepared this year and were able to apply through these first three games?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: I think the experience was really good. Getting those at-bats, knowing what to expect with how the stadium plays. This year, it's played quite the opposite that it did in '24. The ball's been flying.

But knowing like how the shadows work when they get to that 6:00 game. It's been a lot easier to adjust this year, which has been really nice. And so just trying to take that experience, use it for myself, and also try to help out some of the other guys that haven't been here before. And just it's been easier to adapt this year.

**Q. Owen, Carter out there said you watch a ton of film in the hotel room. How much confidence does your film-watching and your study before the game give you to then go into the game and do what you did today?**

OWEN HULL: I can't believe he told you all my secrets. But, yes, I do my homework on the pitchers before the game. And I'm not going to dive too deep into that. But, yeah, gotta do your homework if you want to do well at school, yeah.

**Q. Gavin and Owen, given your secretiveness, you may not want to answer this, but you mentioned the shadows and just how the park plays. Can you kind of give us a sense of the difference of between day game, night game, shadows, the batting eye, all those things?**

GAVIN GALLAHER: Yeah, I mean, it is tough. There's no excuses to be made at all. But it's just something that you have to deal with. You get to the early innings in those later games, the shadows are starting to creep onto the pitcher's mound. Sometimes the guy's releasing it from the light and it's going straight into a shadow in the dark.

And sometimes you've got that timing where there's another window of light on the way to home plate. I mean, it's tough, but at the end of the day both teams are dealing with it. So, yeah, you just gotta go out there and compete. There's no excuses to be made.

**Q. You mentioned the '06 run, but first time since '07. Have you seen any similarities from those '06-'07 teams?**

SCOTT FORBES: A lot -- togetherness. That '06 team, they loved each other. They had a lot of fun together. This team's the same. I picked up on that. They're a tough group. They want to win. They put winning first over everything else. And that team did that.

So there's a ton of similarities. I can't wait to text back the '06 text chain group that I'll get. And there will be some hilarious texts. That's why you coach.

But they do have similarities. Built similar type teams. I'm glad that I was there and can look back on that and hopefully use that to help us a little bit.

**Q. What about the lineup switches and dropping Macon into the 8-hole? Gavin seemed to unlock something with that switch.**

SCOTT FORBES: Scott Jackson, that's why I changed the lineup. I got a text. I already made the lineup last night. I had done all my prep. I dug in pretty hard. I told him to dig in more. He must have dug in more this morning. Got a text -- me and him and Wierz just text each other about the lineup; we have a three way text.

He said, I really think we might want to consider this because of how good the starter and Korn, who we thought we would see 1-2, have been against right-handed hitters. They thought it was really tough at-bat. So we wanted to try to pressure them more.

So eventually I just said, all right, they were going back and forth with a bunch of different lineups. I said, just send me the dadgum lineup and I'm going to write whatever you guys tell me. So it was a credit to Scott Jackson and Jesse Wierzbicki.

**Q. Saw you stop by J.R.'s bench this morning. How does his name continue to live on in this program?**

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, man, his family's here. You know the older you get, you get a lot more perspective. You try to help your players have perspective. That's why we do a lot of things -- community service, children's hospital, Miracle League.

But I told J.R.'s parents, you know, a couple years ago, when we lost him, that I know it seems like that he was affected the most, but he affected the players the most. And he was just a member of our team and miss him dearly.

But got a picture by his bench yesterday -- me and Mandy and Hannah and Ally went by it. And I'm just thankful that I got to know J.R. And the fact that he lived life like he did. And I can see that big smile. He'd be so excited right now, but I know he's excited looking down on us.

**Q. Obviously started Folger today, Jackson comes in. How much of that decision went into what guys are comfortable doing? We talked about it a lot this season, starting versus relieving.**

SCOTT FORBES: I felt great about Folger Boaz. When you have a deep bullpen -- and as a head coach if you see something that you don't like and you feel like it's a key part of a game -- it just is what it is. And it's never personal. And our players know it's not personal.

I thought he had good stuff, but I had the pitch come in. I know where the pitches were called. I just felt like we needed to make a change right there.

But that did go into the thought process. We thought, okay, we can piece this thing together. We don't need Folger Boaz to go five innings, maybe one time through the lineup, maybe get us into the fourth.

But again, every out is vital. And that was a hard game to

win. They made a run at us. We didn't make a couple plays. And I told Folger, you still got us three outs, so keep your confidence. He's going to have to pitch for us to win this national championship. But we like Rose coming out of the bullpen, if at all possible.

**Q. Following up on the answer about the '06 team and '07, when you came back to Carolina at that time as the pitching coach, can you comment on what your perspective was about having the opportunity to play for a national championship in those two years versus what it is almost 20 years later having waited all this time?**

SCOTT FORBES: I'm trying not to get emotional up here because just thinking about that team and Coach Fox giving me the opportunity to get back here.

I wasn't the popular hire at the time. There were a lot bigger names. I had never been a pitching coach. But Coach Fox saw something in me and gave me that opportunity.

I'm not the smartest guy in the room, but I realized pretty quickly after being there and watching bullpens for probably three days that the best thing I can do for this team as the pitching coach is maybe to instill some confidence, because when you're rolling Andrew Miller, Daniel Bard, Robert Woodard, Andrew Carignan, Matt Danford, Jonathan Hovis -- you gotta have some feel and just get the heck out of the way. So that's what I tried to do.

And I owe that to the whole team. I tell them all the time, I owe them my career because those pitchers -- you talk about Andrew Miller and Daniel Bard, two of the top prospects in the country -- and they got a guy coming in there who's never been a pitching coach. And they didn't act like that. Robert Woodard as well, all those guys.

They took me in. I learned more from them that first year. So I always tell them, like, just thank you for you guys for believing in me because, honestly, I had no idea what I was doing.

I was around Roger Williams, a great pitching coach, but I was a catcher. And I felt like I could call a decent game. But when it came to mechanics and all that stuff, I just started reading books than trying to be quiet and not say anything to those guys because they were so talented.

**Q. How important was it to get this done and win your bracket in 3-0 fashion, as opposed to messing around with the if-necessary game?**

SCOTT FORBES: Yeah, I mean, that's the goal. I told the coaches today, listen, I'm going for it. And if we have a chance to win this game, the only guy -- that was still debatable in my mind. I told DeCaro, if I tell you to put your spikes on, you know what that means. Because I know how hard it is to win a game, you get a big lead like that.

And you want those two days if you can get them. Doesn't guarantee that you're going to win. But you have a pitching staff like ours, you can recover, you can get tomorrow to also get a lift in.

It's funny you said that because my wife was, we were talking about being in Omaha, and she remembers the first year very much because we had some off days. And then she also remembers '07 because we lost and it just felt like we were playing every single day to get back to the national championship.

So you want to recover. You want to have a little bit of rest. The guys used these last two days really well, they're focused. And I've already done it. You know I believed that we were going to win today. And we have a plan and we'll stay with that plan the next two days to be ready to play Saturday.

**Q. This offense has been pretty doggone good all year. But how do you describe what you saw from them today?**

SCOTT FORBES: You know I agree with that and they don't get any credit. Every question's about the pitching staff. And I hope that's the case, and I hope it keeps being the case because they play with an edge. And I use that as much as I possibly can.

But you know, you look at a guy like Carter French, steps up there. He's gotta be the best .240 hitter in the country, in my opinion. Gets on base. He rolls the line up over. He's not scared. And we've had some guys struggling.

But it's been to me -- the common theme on this team is, obviously Owen's been Owen, and we've had some guys that have been unbelievable. But we've had different guys step up in big moments.

Look at our RBIs, you know, a lot of guys are getting close to 60, distributed throughout the order. Then you got Tyler Howe who doesn't, he has the least amount of RBIs besides French but he still gets big hits and gets on base and then he scores.

I think there's length to it. I also think a guy we've got some other guys that did not get at-bats these three

games, but I got a hunch that they're going to come up big for us and they'll be ready.

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