

# 2026 Men's College World Series

Sunday, June 21, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Skip Johnson

Jaxon Willits

Trey Gambill

Postgame Press Conference



JAXON WILLITS: Yeah, we have a saying, yesterday's dead. And I feel that's kind of been our motto through the whole year. And I feel like we've got to move on past today. Today doesn't affect us anymore after this conference right here. We're going to go on tomorrow and how we can attack them and how we can go out and win a national championship tomorrow.

**Q. What did you see from Caden Glauber today? Trey, I know you had the single, which was the only hit off of him, and the walk. But you know, 98, he was pretty effective?**

TREY GAMBILL: Yeah, he's a good pitcher. Going to have to have a better plan tomorrow. Sure we're going to see him. We'll go back and make some adjustments and come back at them.

JAXON WILLITS: Yeah, he was attacking, getting ahead early. And I feel like when you're ahead a lot 0-1, 0-2, you kind of have your full arsenal at your disposal, and he was able to just kind of get guys swinging at his pitches because he was ahead in the count so much.

**Q. Been a few weeks since you lost a game, but you have been here before. You had three elimination games in Atlanta. How much does that experience help you guys for tomorrow, backs against the wall, if any?**

JAXON WILLITS: I mean, we're comfortable in this situation. We've proven all year long we're not going to quit. We're going to fight no matter if we're up 10-0 or down 10-0, we're going to fight. And I feel like even you see that in the ninth there; we were fighting until the last out. And I feel like we're going to show tomorrow that we're not going to quit and we're going to fight no matter.

TREY GAMBILL: Yeah, it will be entertaining game for sure. It's going to be super fun as a player. I'm sure it's going to be super fun as a fan to see two teams just really fighting for a national championship.

**Q. As a guy, you've coached a lot of pretty good pitchers. From a pitching coach perspective, what do**

North Carolina - 6, Oklahoma - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Oklahoma head coach Skip Johnson and student-athletes Trey Gambill and Jaxon Willits.

SKIP JOHNSON: We took the momentum early in the game, scored two runs. And then Xander goes out and punches out the side in the first inning. And that's the trick in baseball is not to get away from your game plan and start trying to punch guys out and kind of lost it a little bit. Instead of just trying to throw the ball to the target, he's trying to pinch people out.

And that happens. No different than we kind of get off our game plan going pitch to pitch. We've done a really good job over the last couple of weeks with it. And we'll learn from it. And that's a good thing.

They got the momentum and they never gave it back. We faced two really good pitchers, and hats off to those guys. And that's about how it ended.

**Q. Just the mentality going into Game 3 tomorrow knowing that you've got another opportunity to close this out?**

TREY GAMBILL: I think we're excited. Obviously tough loss today. But I don't think we overly care. We know that we still have the opportunity to win the national championship.

So it's going to be a fun atmosphere. We're excited. Have a good meal tonight, good shower and be ready for tomorrow.



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**you see from Caden Glauber that makes him so special out there?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Just like Jaxon said, he attacks the mitt one pitch at a time. He keeps the ball down. He's got a quick arm, short in the back. Gets on you. I think the little bit of run that he has is good. And he can locate a fastball in.

If you can do those things, it will open up one side of the plate or the other.

And the angle that he attacks from is really a good angle. It's a low three-quarter, high three-quarter, right in the mix right there. And just stays on line. He's really good. He's going to be a really special pitcher.

**Q. The same question I asked Trey and Jaxon, I am sure that about a month ago if they would have told you have one game to go win a national championship, you guys would have taken it. What's the mentality going into tomorrow night's game?**

SKIP JOHNSON: I think those guys will be ready to play. I mean, we've faced adversity all year long and dealt with it. We have a lot of good leaders on our team.

And I think it will be good. I think they'll pick each other up like they have all year long. They're selfless players. And I'm really excited for tomorrow, and can't wait to get here.

**Q. You guys have now seen Walker McDuffie and Caden Glauber one time through the order through two games in this series. How can that help you in Game 3?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Both of them are good pitchers, and you've got to go pitch to pitch and separate balls from strikes and get the pitches that you can hit and not miss them. Easier said than done for an amateur baseball player.

That's what happens in a game. No different than what happened to Cord or Xander. Cord, yesterday, was trying really hard. I thought our kids tried really hard. And when you try in baseball, you fail. You get out of your game plan because you're trying to get a hit, you're trying to change the scoreboard.

There are things that will happen, instead of just staying in your routine and making sure your routine is your lifeline.

**Q. Just how would you assess Xander's day overall? You mentioned he came out with a lot of strikeouts early and then had that really long third that kind of got**

**to him?**

SKIP JOHNSON: He threw four innings and punched out eight and he walked three. I thought he was really good starting out.

And that happens. I'm telling you, that happens. When you start punching guys out, you start trying to punch guys out and strike them out. That's what I mean by "punch." You start trying to do that.

When you try in this game and get away from the fabric or the very essence of what baseball is about, the only thing you can control is throwing the ball to the target. You get out of your plan. And when you start trying, when you try to get back in your plan, it's a struggle.

**Q. Talk about the offense. You guys jump on UNC for two runs right away. And then after that, it's kind of scarce with the hits and getting runners on. Was that more a testament to what Carolina was doing? Or was there just something you guys didn't have the best approach that you wanted today?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Once we went up 2-0, we had a little momentum. We go out and throw a goose egg in the second. And the third happens. We walk the lead-off hitter, trying to strike the guy out. Had a really good at-bat.

Something happens, I don't even know what happens -- they hit a ball really hard right at Jaxon. Looked like it was 115 miles an hour, and it took a bad hop on him. And really he's going to make that play -- if that ball stays down he'll make that play. He's good enough to do that.

And that's kind of where it started. And he started trying to pitch out of the inning, trying to try and strike people out in the inning, instead of damage control and move on.

And for a young pitcher that's hard to do. And he'll learn from that. And he'll learn each, he'll get better each time out.

I mean, how many freshmen have you seen pitcher in that environment like that? I've only had one, and his name was Taylor Jungmann, and he was good.

**Q. Wesloski, tomorrow, you think?**

SKIP JOHNSON: We'll throw Wesloski tomorrow. I'm sure we will.

**Q. You like him in that spot?**

SKIP JOHNSON: Do you?



**Q. I love it.**

SKIP JOHNSON: Good, as long as you like it, I like it.

**Q. You're in charge. Not me.**

SKIP JOHNSON: Yeah, we can blame it on you if he doesn't pitch good, right?

**Q. That's fair. (Laughter). The way the guys talked about resilience and bouncing back and stuff like that, you guys have been riding momentum now for, what, two weeks, three weeks? A nice winning streak, nine-game winning streak. What level of concern do you have about getting back into the resilience and the grittiness tomorrow for the championship?**

SKIP JOHNSON: I thought we played gritty today. I thought we played resilient today. I didn't see us not play resilient or play with any confidence. I thought we tried too hard.

I don't think it's a momentum run as much as it is a confident run. They're confident in themselves and they play for each other. And when you see that confidence, you just kind of get out of their way.

I mean, there's something -- if every baseball player could bottle that or baseball coach could bottle that and throw it on a team, it would be incredible. But that's not how it goes.

Confidence is a fragile piece of ice, that is -- you can go one day and then the next day it's not there. And that's the thing about that.

I thought they kept staying with their routines, going pitch-to-pitch all year long, or the last three weeks, for sure, not all year long, but the last three weeks. And it's been really good.

**Q. You have two of your biggest leaders up here today in Trey Gambill and Jaxon Willits. How important is their leadership going to be tomorrow in a Game 3?**

SKIP JOHNSON: It's going to be huge. There's no doubt about it. They'll go back. They'll eat dinner together. They'll get those guys together. I don't have to worry about that. They'll be ready to play. And looking forward to it.

**Q. At the end of the game, you were sending out a steady stream of arms out of your bullpen. What did it mean to get some of those guys an outing on the mound in the College World Series?**

SKIP JOHNSON: I think I cut a trail from the dugout to the home plate. A deer can run right down it.

Yeah, I think it's good. They got experience. That's number one. Number two, not afraid to throw those guys back out there if we need them. They've got their feet wet.

We did that in '22 with David Sandlin in the first game against Texas A&M and he gave up four runs in the first game. And we still won the game. And then he came back and struck out 12 to take us to the national championship game.

So those guys getting out there and getting comfortable in that environment is really big for them. And it just shows you the testament of, I thought they came in and attacked the zone with what they could. I really believe they had their heart in it. And that's really what it's about for me.

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