

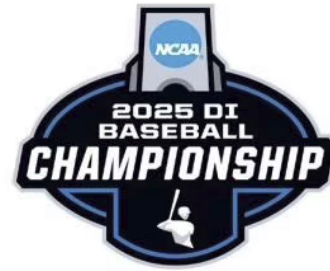
College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Little Rock Trojans Coach Chris Curry Angel Cano

Postgame Press Conference



LSU - 10, Little Rock - 6

CHRIS CURRY: Heck of a run. It was a heck of a run. I'm very grateful. Just told the team in the locker room that every baseball game at some point, they take the spikes from you and your season is over. And you never want that to happen, but if it's going to happen, you want it to happen in June, and you want to have it happen on a postseason field. And we accomplished that.

It hurts right now because we don't like to lose and we're competitors. But these men changed Little Rock baseball forever. I'm thankful for the opportunity to coach them. And I'm proud, proud of my guys.

Little Rock baseball took a step forward this year, and the expectation and standard is to be playing in June. You have to win a Regional to get it. Credit goes to LSU, what a fine job they did on the mound with the three arms. Evans, true freshman I'm told, correct me if I'm wrong, but he was really tough.

And LSU did what good teams are supposed to do. When the inning was set up for them, whether it be a couple of walks or maybe an error, they got the big hit. And I thought that they played like a championship team tonight. So congratulations to Jay and LSU.

Q. Angel, would you like to take a moment to talk about the honors you received after the game? I know it's second thought for what you were here for but being named All-Tournament First Baseman but also Most Outstanding Player for the tournament. Would you like to share your thoughts on earning those accolades?

ANGEL CANO: It means a lot. Like Coach say just the day before yesterday, I have gone through a lot. So it truly means a lot to me. It just means a lot. That's all I've got to

say.

Q. LSU has been a team that was, on and off, the No. 1 team in the country for most of this year, and you guys really took them to the brink for two straight days. Just the mental tax, the physical tax of losing the first game, having to win three straight, play four in a row. I guess talk about how you guys were able to accomplish that and get to this point in the tournament?

ANGEL CANO: Well, we always talk about flipping the page. We came here, played LSU. One of the best teams in the country. They punched us and we did our best, flip it up, punch them back. And then got to today, and we just went out there, battled with them all day long. They got us. So great team.

Q. What do you feel like Little Rock baseball proved this weekend?

ANGEL CANO: I think it just shows how much work we put in, and the coaches, the people that have been around us, everything, like the time we put in and the way we go after every day. I'm just happy that it shows that we've been putting some work in behind the scenes.

Q. Coach talked earlier in the week about how much you've gone through in your journey to get here. How vindicating is it to get to a spot like this and perform as well as you did and represent Little Rock in the way you've done this weekend?

ANGEL CANO: I don't see too much as myself, but I see it as the coaching staff believing in me. They took me when no one wanted me. I'm just happy they gave me a chance and did what finally I was able to do, what I know can.

Q. Wondering what Evans was doing as someone there at the plate. What did he do so well tonight?

ANGEL CANO: He was nasty. He was spinning it really good. Throwing me some fastballs there, made me think about it a little bit. Got me. I'm happy that I got him back in my last AB.

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Q. You said you have to go to a Regional to learn how to win a Regional. What do you feel like y'all learned this weekend that can help you take the next step next time?

CHRIS CURRY: We did learn how to finish games. We learned how to finish in our conference tournament to get the last hardest out of a baseball game, the 27th out to win a championship and hold up a trophy, which we do have a new trophy back home.

And we learned how to finish games here. The next step is to learn how to finish a Regional. It's a one-run game in the eighth at Alex Box Stadium. And three weeks ago, you would have told me that, I would have said you need to talk to somebody.

So we had every opportunity to win. LSU answered. That's what good teams do. So that's what we'll learn. But to answer your question, learning how to first finish off a game, then finish off a championship in the postseason.

And we got a lot of guys that are returning off this club. We're excited about the guys that are coming to Little Rock. And we have so many things that we're going to be able to use as teaching moments and reflect on to show up back here 365 days from now.

Q. I saw you spent a little time there with Jay Johnson after the game. Curious maybe what he said to you and the season y'all had, anything like that, and I guess how rewarding maybe is the best word to use for that, I don't know if it's the best word, but just what was that conversation like, I guess?

CHRIS CURRY: Emotionally I'm not there yet. But I think I will be. I better allow myself to be. I'm not very good at that. I'm already thinking about which recruits I want to call and move on. But I need to reflect because I know it was special.

Before the game, Jay and I had a moment. We exchanged lineup cards and he said, hey, I just want to tell you how much respect I have for you guys and however the game turns out.

And I said I've never met Jay before this weekend, but I have always admired him. Coach on the West Coast, Arizona. I'm a student of the game of baseball. I follow everything. I watch everything. And I really appreciate and respect how Jay teaches the game and he's classy to the other team. LSU never did anything directed at our team. They never -- celebration is great with your own team. That's what college baseball is all about.

After the game, to answer your question, he just stopped and said, unbelievable job coaching your team. And he said he wants to make sure and stay in touch, and I think that's just a couple of baseball guys that appreciate each other.

Q. I know it's difficult to look at something like this in totality right now, but when you look back on your season and everything you've been through, what's the biggest thing you learned, not necessarily on the diamond, but as a person and as a coach? What's the biggest thing you learned from this group?

CHRIS CURRY: You're trying to get me going again, aren't you? I learned about myself. When you are squeezed, what's on the inside comes out. We got squeezed.

We were not very good there for a while. So I'll look back on how I personally handled the adversity as a coach, as a husband, as a father, and be better at that.

But we came out on the other side of it. So I know that I have some toughness, and I hope that showed in my team.

Q. In terms of the support, what do you say to your supporters, the state of Arkansas, the alums of Little Rock, and just the fans moving forward about this program in order to take it to the next level?

CHRIS CURRY: Frank and the staff put together a watch party, 100 people or something, I heard. We felt all the love from back in the state of Arkansas.

News flash, we're not the only college baseball team in the state of Arkansas. But tonight I hope everybody in the state of Arkansas was pulling for Little Rock, and I'm proud to be from Little Rock and from the state.

Q. What did Evans did so well to shut you down there in the middle?

CHRIS CURRY: True freshman. Houston, where baseball players grow on trees, arguably the number one recruiting city in the country.

It's downhill tilt. More mid-90s than anything else. Just to talk a little baseball, one thing that he was doing was he was working very fast. So what we started trying -- there were two things we started to try to disrupt. The 22nd pitch clock, we've got to have our eyes up at eight seconds.

We were trying to take him down to the legal last second we could to slow him down because when a guy is rolling like that on the mound, he cannot throw the ball quick



enough as he should, rightfully so. When you're throwing a ball like that, you want to get it and go. I've seen our guy Jackson do that when he's rolling.

I told them you have to slow down and make sure -- when your eyes come up -- he was timing it really well to where we couldn't quite get into our timing and rhythm all the time. Some guys did. This guy here, Angel Cano, did because he's an elite hitter. But other guys that was tough on us.

The split, the changeup, if someone can help me with exactly what he calls it, we classify it as a split finger in the mid-80s. It was hard, straight down, tumbling. That was the pitch you were getting all the swings and misses on.

When a guy throws like that, you have to make a swing decision very early. When a split finger comes out of a hand like that, they were reading it as a fastball, and it wasn't.

We knew he was available, and we knew that he was next. And that's another one that I think is going to pitch on TV, and he did a fine job.

Then you see Eyanson trot out there, we hit the chopper over third base, we had him on the ropes a little bit. As we say in the Little Rock dugout he bowed his neck and he made the big pitches with the curveball.

Q. You guys had played so loose this whole time, do you feel you got tightened up as the game got close and the moment got caught up to you guys, or was it just baseball?

CHRIS CURRY: Not at all. That was the pitchers. Evans and Eyanson. The guys were doing everything that they -- everything in their power tonight to try to get to them.

The reason I say that we have five spot there early off of a really good arm and Alex Seguire with the backside single. We did some short game things. And it all came to a screeching halt. And then we pulled it within one, and then they stretched it back out, scoring in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, that's how you win ball games, win championships.

Q. Talk about that five spot in the second. You guys did some pretty good work off Zac Cowan. What was the report on him coming in? You knew he was one of the few arms that was readily available for LSU. Talk about what you did to prepare for him how you were all able to attack him so well?

CHRIS CURRY: My staff and I had guessed and narrowed

it down to two arms, and it was Cowan and Evans. Just pure guess. Homework and a guess. And we were right. Cowan, not as tall, but harder sink and harder spin, his movement side to side. Tonight -- his slider is very good. Tonight it wasn't his best slider. And that's no disrespect to him. I think he'd probably tell you that.

So they were able to see the slider, put some good swings on it. The big inning was with the freshman, Cade Martin, with a walk. And that's another great story. That's a true freshman catching on this field. He's exhausted. He's caught every game for a month. And he has done a great job.

But I thought Cowan just got -- I think, as an opponent, for him to be successful, he needs to be down and I thought he just got up in the zone a little bit. Evans did what he needed to do.

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