

College World Series: Baton Rouge Super Regional

Saturday, June 7, 2025

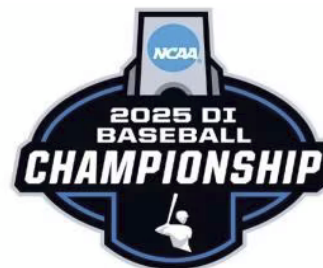
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

West Virginia Mountaineers

Coach Steve Sabins

Sam White

Postgame Press Conference



throws something out of his hand that looks like a ball and ends up a strike, and he throws a strike of his hand that ends up a ball.

You just trust your training, try to play naturally. Working a pitch count is one thing. But if he gives you something to hit, you're not trying to foul it off; you're trying to hit it. Swing at strikes, take the balls.

Q. This team, win or lose throughout the season, has been very good at just putting things behind him. How do you go about doing that, knowing that another opportunity awaits tomorrow and your season's on the line?

SAM WHITE: They could have beat us 40-0 and tomorrow it's 0-0 at first pitch. So, nothing to it. It's a series, like Sabe said in the postgame. We don't have to crawl back like it's a regional and win four more. We just go out, compete tomorrow and try to win one game.

Q. How hot was it out there? And you had some long innings obviously with a lot of runs scored by both sides. How much did that play into the day that it was?

SAM WHITE: It was really hot. We came into it knowing it was going to be hot. But I mean you just try and hydrate as much as you possibly can. Luckily I'm a DH. So, I'm not out there very much out there for those long innings.

I cramped going around first base and I'm not playing defense. It's really tough, but we have a strength coach that pounds electrolytes for us. You just try to trust them and drink as much as you can.

Q. This team's so good on the road. What was the environment like at the box? And how does that compare to other road environments you faced this year?

SAM WHITE: I think it was probably the loudest stadium we played in. I think it's really cool. Like I said a few days ago, our core guys, I guess seven out of nine in our lineup, we played in a super regional last year against UNC.

LSU - 16, West Virginia - 9

STEVE SABINS: Proud of the guys. Kept fighting throughout the entire game. Put up a two spot in the ninth when we were trailing by a significant margin. Had 11 hits, really competed well against a high-end pitcher in Kade Anderson, one of the best in the country. I think he's one of the top strikeout guys in the nation, and I thought our offense did a really nice job.

Played competitive baseball. Game slipped away from us a little bit out of the bullpen. Asked a lot of guys to compete at a high level. Quite a few kids that hadn't been in a scenario like that before.

And we had some great things happen. We had some struggles throughout the game. I certainly know that we kept fighting. So, proud of the guys.

Q. You had a pretty good day at the plate. What did you see from LSU on the mound that you were able to take advantage of?

SAM WHITE: I knew his go-to pitch would be that slider, the curveball. I knew he had a really good heater, but for the most part, lefty-lefty, they're going to go with something away from you.

I just came into the game knowing if he left the breaking ball up I was going to go be aggressive to it, and it ended up working out.

Q. This team is aggressive, obviously, at the plate, but you're trying to elevate a pitch count, try to get their starting pitcher out of the game. How do you kind of balance those two things. Obviously that worked for you but is that difficult to do?

SAM WHITE: Absolutely. He's a really good pitcher. He



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We're ready for that stuff.

Clemson, we won a game at Clemson last weekend that kind of showed us we can win in a really tough environment. This was the loudest it's been, for sure. But we kind of feed into that. Everybody loves to make a stadium go silent.

Q. You mentioned in your opening statement going to some pitchers you hadn't used much this year. Could you walk us through those decisions when you lift your starter and why you went to those guys?

STEVE SABINS: Kirn has been so good for us all year. He's been our workhorse. I didn't think Kirn was quite as sharp. Probably had something to do with the fact that he threw twice in a week for the first time all season last weekend.

So he started game one of the regional and then closed out the regional. And obviously the conditions today, being so hot and humid, a little bit shorter rest for him. He wasn't quite as crisp.

Less about the results. He gave up a couple of runs. But it was more about the crispness of the pitches. We felt as a staff that we would be better off going to somebody else.

We had some players throughout the season make these big jumps, and so there's always some risk associated with it, but it's kind of like Armani Guzman starting last week really paid off. And Ben Lumsden and those guys hadn't been in the lineup as much.

We felt some of these pitchers have been really, really great throughout some smaller outings, some shorter outings, some sim games. We think they're ready to compete at the highest level. And they certainly are. Didn't go their way this week, but when you trail in the game, there's always some balance of making sure that you go to win the game, but also that you have enough arms to compete and win a series. So there's always that balance.

Q. Following up on that, Steve, if the score's different, if it's a little closer, does that lead to different choices, Bassinger, maybe Meyer, guys like that? How much was it game situation versus some of the other things you saw?

STEVE SABINS: I think every game situation is going to dictate who you decide to go to. There's too many variables to decide. But certainly score is one of them. But who is hitting, what the score is, the situation, how far along in the game you are, all of that plays into those

decisions.

Q. Did you feel like Griffin was out of gas?

STEVE SABINS: Yes. I felt like Griffin was out of gas. His velocity was lower than it had been in weeks. His crispness was lower than it had been in weeks. His command was less than it had been in weeks. So we have a really good team. It takes our depth and it takes everybody, if we're going to win at the highest levels. So we didn't think that he was the best option there.

Q. With Kade Anderson today, nine hits, six earned runs, that's the most anyone's put on him this season. What sort of allowed you guys to really open things up in later innings with him on the mound?

STEVE SABINS: We have a talented offense, and we don't strikeout very often. That's what Kade Anderson has success doing. He strikes people out and we don't strikeout very often.

So I think the length of the at-bats allowed us to score runs. It's hard out there as a pitcher because of the heat. So I think, in general, if somebody can go 115 pitches traditionally and be really, really successful that way, today it's probably less. There's some percentage where guys are going to struggle.

And I felt like our hitters stayed very focused, won a lot of pitches early. Even from the very first at-bat of the game, I think Guzman had an eight-to-10 pitch at-bat, and I think that set the tone right off the bat that it's going to be difficult to strike us out and you're going to have to earn everything that you get, and just over the course of the time, I think our offense wore them down.

But again, he's incredible. He went seven innings and gave up six earned in his worst outing, as you said, of the year.

So he did a great job and kept them in the game and allowed for their bullpen to only use so many arms today.

Q. What did you think of Griffin's start today?

STEVE SABINS: Griffin's start? Competitive. Selfless. Wanting to win. Doing everything for his team. That's what he gives us every time he gets on the mound.

Q. How did you guys prepare for the heat today? Was there any difference maybe coming into Baton Rouge throughout the week that you and the team did to get ready for this environment?



STEVE SABINS: We talked about it all week about hydrating. We had electrolyte drinks that were provided to our players before and after practices, at room checks. We made it a major focus.

Q. Any pitching plans tomorrow that you're willing to reveal?

STEVE SABINS: Not yet. We've got to get together after today's because just because each game, the situation changes. So we'll get together as a staff and make some decisions.

Q. Is there anything you can take offensively from what you did today, or is it like your player just said, it's a new start, fresh game at 0-0 tomorrow?

STEVE SABINS: I think there's a lot you can take from every game, whether it's good or bad, you win or lose, there's something you can take from it. I think our perspective, stepping foot against a very competitive team with a great pitcher and having success, if anything, confidence heavily is built on -- sorry, offense is built on confidence, and so I think our offense should have confidence going into tomorrow.

Q. Leading into tomorrow, potentially season on the line, what's your message to the guys?

STEVE SABINS: Just this is what we've done all season. This is a series. I told them that if you lose Game 1 of a Regional, you've got to win four games and you're in a loser bracket. It's a very different scenario.

This is more traditional baseball. This is what we've been doing all year. You've got to go win a series. If you can get to a Game 3, everything changes. It's all about winning tomorrow, playing for the season, playing for your teammates, and then you get to Game 3 and that's when things can get really fun.

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