

College World Series: Baton Rouge Super Regional

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

LSU Tigers

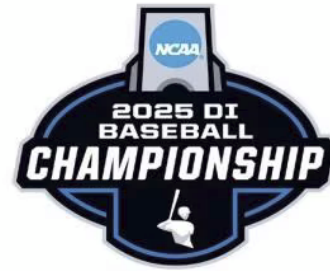
Coach Jay Johnson

Anthony Eyanson

Steven Milam

Jared Jones

Postgame Press Conference



teammates and brothers. And I'm super excited about what lies ahead of us.

Q. Steven, when your team needed you the most in these supers you had eight RBIs in these two games, a grand slam, a bases-clearing double to really give you guys separation. What is it about these big moments that you think really allows you to thrive? And what was working so well for you this weekend?

STEVEN MILAM: Just being patient. I heard my dad a lot, getting back to the basics, and I love the big moment. I didn't help my team as much as I wanted to during the year. I had to step up take pressure off the other guys. I feel like I've been able to do that. Our whole team is running great at-bats 1 through 9. You can punch in 15 different guys and we're going to beat you.

I just love the big moments. It's what I came here for, and that's why you come to LSU.

Q. Jared, how does this feel compared to two years ago when you guys made it? You were part of the team, but now you're one of the leaders, one of the guys they count on?

JARED JONES: I look back at my freshman year a lot throughout the year, like, moments in that year where I could learn from it, whether that was guys on the field or me as a spectator watching the game. There's always something I could take from it my freshman year. I tried to dive into that and really kind of take it in and soak it all in.

This year just going out there and competing and knowing that it's 9 on 1 out there and it's going to be a great time. Alex Box was packed. It was awesome.

There's nothing more I could say than I'm just super grateful and what a wonderful day it's been.

Q. Steven and Jared, building on the offense, you guys seem pretty dialed in to your approach this weekend, really capitalizing on their mistakes a lot. Just scoring 28 runs over the two games, what does that do for you guys confidence-wise, and how well

LSU - 12, West Virginia - 5

Q. Anthony, obviously this is the reason you come to LSU, to get an opportunity to go to Omaha. Tough conditions today. Tough West Virginia lineup. Talk about how you managed that start and moving through the game like you did?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Very tough lineup, obviously. Just had to mentally lock in a little bit more than normal. Just focus on executing a pitch. Slowing down in the moment. Couple times I felt like I was moving a little too fast. Just wanted to slow it down, really take a deep breath and just be myself.

Q. Jared, when we talked to you guys at the beginning of the season, a lot of you used the phrase, we have the right guys on the bus with us, and you guys adopted that tough together mindset. Speak to the journey that this team has been on and the character that it's taken to get them to the point that you guys are right now.

JARED JONES: It's been an unbelievable ride for us the last nine or 10 months that we've put in together as a team. Started all the way back on September 1st in the meeting room, meeting everybody for the first time, and going out, having the first practice in the humidity and heat. We were built in it from day one.

From day one there was a fundamental -- to go out there and compete to have a lot of fun doing it. That's what we did tonight -- we went out there and competed and had a lot of fun doing it. These guys sitting next to me, I'm super blessed to be sitting next to them and call them my



you all think you're swinging the bat right now going into Omaha?

JARED JONES: I think it's big for us. I think we had a great weekend. Obviously we capped off a good season at home in Alex Box and that's what we wanted to do. We wanted to punch our ticket to Omaha, and we wanted to get the bats going. And we did that.

And the job's not finished. We've got a lot more work ahead of us. We're going to have practice on Tuesday, get on a plane on Wednesday and fly out there and get right back to work and get recovered and rested, and get ready for game one.

STEVEN MILAM: I just think 1 through 9, running tough at-bats together. It's not always going to go perfect but us sticking with it and making us hard to get out is the biggest thing for us and just sticking to our approach.

Q. Jared, you and Steven are very close, and he had a monster weekend, pun intended. Just what did you see from him?

JARED JONES: He was completely in control of himself. Coach Johnson went through the lineup before the game and told him if he kept taking the ABs he's been taking the last few weeks we would go out there and have a good chance to win this game.

All four or five of hit at-bats he went out there and competed his tail off and really did a good job, four RBIs, had that big bases-clearing double for us. He was just himself this weekend and did the job for us and got the momentum going in our dugout.

Q. Jared and Steven, this was statistically Kartsonas' worse start this season. What were your plans in the box and what made you so successful?

JARED JONES: We just went out there and we wanted to get pitches in the middle of the plate and do damage on him and take everything else. That was our plan going into it was get the ball at the plate in the thigh and don't miss it. And when he lets us walk down to first base you take it. That was the plan tonight and we did a good job executing it.

STEVEN MILAM: He was missing a little bit. Just trying to get him in our zone and take good swings. And we took our walks and capitalized when we needed to.

Q. Anthony, just the job that Cooper and Chase did for you, the growth that we've seen out of Chase all season, but Cooper really turning it on late. What do

you see in those two guys throwing the ball?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Just really consistent with our work ethic. Both those guys never give up. It's never been easy for them. They've always worked hard. It's really easy to be confident in those two guys who put their best foot forward every time.

Q. Jared, what can you take away from your freshman year in '23 and apply to this time going to Omaha and help some of the guys who haven't been to Omaha before?

JARED JONES: I think it's really important to get back to your fundamentals and take it one pitch at a time. It's just baseball. It's a change of venue, but that's about it.

We have to go out there, take balls, swing at strikes, crush mistakes and throw strikes defensively and play great defense behind our pitchers. The game doesn't change; we're going to go out there compete take things one pitch at a time in Omaha.

Q. Sticking with that theme, of course, when you compare the two programs, the two Omaha programs or teams, what was it about this team that's taking all back do you believe?

JARED JONES: I think it's the collection of guys we have in the locker room. I think, go back to last Monday against Little Rock, Coach Johnson said not one guy was going to let us lose that game. We all collectively took a step forward that day as far as where we wanted to go as a team and kind of the contribution everybody was putting into the team and the effort and the energy in the dugout.

So for us to go out there tonight, we knew what was on the line. We didn't need any motivation to go out there and compete today. And we were just doing it for one another -- the nine guys on the field, the 10 or 12 guys in the dugout.

That's the reason why I show up to the field every day compete for those guys and make sure they know how much I care about them and willing to go out and perform for them.

Q. Steven, couple of big hits yesterday, few big hits today. What does it mean to you to be a big part of this tiger trip to Omaha?

STEVEN MILAM: It's a dream come true. Coming from Las Cruces in New Mexico, you couldn't imagine it. I'm standing here from all the hard work. And Coach Johnson giving me a chance. All the hard work I've put in, my



teammates have put in with me, them believing in me. It's amazing and I'm still at a loss of words for it.

Q. Steven and Jared, 10 hits, only three for extra bases, you guys are doing a better job hitting singles, getting them to the outfield, Jared, you especially today. How much did your approach change if at all? And how important was that for your success knowing what's ahead in Omaha?

JARED JONES: I think just for me going up there with a clear mind and taking it one pitch at a time, I think I get pitched differently a lot than most guys and just going out there and understanding I've got to be patient in the box and take my walks. When pitchers make mistakes, do damage on them.

Today I was really trying to be really relaxed and move the offense and get guys on base, get some momentum in our dugout. And then obviously let Steve come through in big-time moments. That's what he does. That's what our offense did today. I'm super proud of our guys.

STEVEN MILAM: Me, just staying focused, sticking to my plan being a tough out, that's the biggest thing for me. I don't have the biggest zone but they've got to throw it down there, need to be able to hit it hard or just don't swing.

Q. Anthony and Steve and Jay had said that it was like 15 to 18 degrees hotter this week than last week. Was this about the hottest you guys have played in here at LSU? And did you see their pitchers, particularly, struggling in the heat the last two days?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Yeah, honestly I was focused on our guys, but I could say it was for sure pretty hot out there. Just didn't want to let that element affect the game at all, though.

Q. Jared and Steven, Josh gets in and gets a pinch-hit there in the ninth inning, gets a pretty big ovation in what's his last at-bat at Alex Box Stadium. How cool is it for a guy who has been here for four years, been with the program through everything these last four years, how cool was that to see him get that sort of ovation?

JARED JONES: Special for sure. He's an unbelievable human being and a terrific teammate. He's been one of my best friends for the past three years, and he's somebody that I'll probably talk to every day for the rest of my life.

He's been a great person. He's my roommate on the road. I spent a lot of time with him. I'm glad I got to watch that at-bat from on deck and see all the people get on their feet

for him.

I think he's the only player since Coach Johnson has been here to play all four years. He's a special player and a special human. I just love him. I'm super proud of him. I'm excited to see where he keeps going.

Q. Anthony, kind of a two-parter, first, what's your off-speed pitch? And second, how do you know that you have that in your back pocket? If it's 0-2, 1-2 count and you throw it down in the zone, the hitters always chase.

ANTHONY EYANSON: I think you said, what is your off-speed pitch. I throw a curveball, slider and a splitter. And when I throw them down in the zone and they swing and miss I get happy.

(Laughter).

Q. Anthony, you might have talked about it at the beginning. I came in a little later. What was it like when you came out of the game, get a standing ovation in a super regional like that?

ANTHONY EYANSON: Just super blessed for the opportunity. Talking to Coach Johnson, moments like that are what pop into my head.

Couldn't have done it without any of the coaches, trainers, teammates. Just the on-and-the-off-the-field support here it's ridiculous. Just really grateful to be a Tiger.

Q. Coach, would you like to say anything before we cut them loose?

JAY JOHNSON: Very thankful. Don't take these nights for granted. I'll be the first coach to acknowledge they don't happen without special human beings, and that's what we've got right here.

I've known Steven since he was in seventh grade, and he's the best shortstop in America, and took another step -- it wasn't just a great college player this weekend, that's what a Major League player looked like in the batter's box. And it was the reason that our offense played close to its capability.

With Jared, he made a decision to come back this season for this and this opportunity ahead of us next week and to be at the front of it. And that's what he's been. And three years, a lot blood, sweat and tears in the bucket. Couldn't be prouder of the person that he is, the leader he is. Obviously he's a great player.



Just very thankful that he made that decision. And it's just the way that it is now.

Every summer, one guy tips the scales whether you can actually get there or not. And Anthony was that guy. And from one phone conversation and you pair the attitude, the character, the conviction and watch him pitch, it's like we have to have this guy. There's no way we could not have him at LSU this year.

And just very thankful. I think these are three great guys to have up here that exemplify what this team is and always want to go. This is the best place in the world. It's the only place in the world for me.

I really wanted these guys to go because they earned it. Whether we won two games this weekend or not they earned a trip to the College World Series. And I can't wait to go chase a national championship with them.

Sorry for being a little late. Again, I mentioned not taking this for granted. It's a special night out there. As I said, I just really wanted these guys to achieve this. I feel like they've earned it.

It's been a great 12 months, and honestly it started with a lot of heart break in Chapel Hill last year. That team played as good as they possibly could to win that regional. And we didn't. We came up a little short. You look around after a few days, there's only 12 returning players from last year's team because of the draft and other things.

And then we have this great freshman class that you have to get them through the draft. Obviously went to work in the portal.

And those 12 guys I mentioned, though, they were the right 12 guys. They were like Jared. They were like Steven. Taking that collection of talent and making it a team, very tough, very together, very team-over-me. That was kind of our motto for the year.

And I told them after the game, I'm super proud of them because the rewards of tough and together were out there on the field tonight. Like I said, I can't wait -- they're worthy, and I can't wait to go chase a national championship with them?

Q. I know you don't want to make this moment about you. You just talked about how much you wanted this for the guys. But this personally has been a special run for you, 500th career win and a second trip to Omaha since you've been at LSU. How special is this moment for you?

JAY JOHNSON: Like I said, I don't take it for granted. Very proud. It's a big life change coming out here. And I know where I'm at and I know what I'm entrusted with. I give it my entire life. And I give it to these guys and they give it back to me.

It's so fun and exciting and rewarding to see all those people so passionate and thankful for the effort that everybody in this program that everybody cares so much about be appreciated.

And it was an awesome night. And just a lot of gratitude and very thankful.

Q. You've leaned heavily into this freshman corps all season. But the last couple of weeks, Derek, Casan, Cooper Williams tonight, these guys are really coming through for you in big time moments. What have you learned about that core group over the last couple of weeks and what they'll have to do for you here when you go to Omaha?

JAY JOHNSON: I think moving forward, they just need to be themselves. Coach Bertman had a thing, he said to his players, if you're here, all you can do is all you can do and that's good enough.

And all Casan Evans can do is what he can do and that's plenty good enough for me. And Cooper and Derek and Cade Arrambide and William Schmidt and John Pearson, it's a special group. It doesn't happen all the time. And nobody in our league plays freshmen. They just don't. We do. And they played pretty darned good baseball.

And I'm proud of them for contributing on a team this good to contribute as much as that group has is awesome. And they're the foundation of this thing moving forward. And I'm really happy that -- it's another reason being there is so important that I mean. That's the frontline of this thing as we move forward past 2025, and so they're going to get the full gamut and be ready to lead in a way that you have to have if you want to have the program that we have.

Q. 28 runs on just 18 hits but lots of walks and hit-by-pitches and reaching on errors, do you try to incorporate that into the offensive approach? And if so, how difficult is that when the stakes are so high to make everybody so eager to get a hit, (indiscernible) to get everybody to be patient and wait for those opportunities to come?

JAY JOHNSON: Something I take a lot of pride in is trying to have our team play it's best when it matters the most. I think one of the beauties about playing and coaching here is that every game really matters.



We use the regular season and call it a 56-game playoff for two reasons. That means it's not a given that you're going to be in the NCAA Tournament. You have to earn your way there, so you have to respect the game every night.

But then when you get here, if you treat every game like that, nothing changes. And I take a lot of pride in we play our best when it matters the most. That's been, over the course of a few different schools.

And it really shined tonight. I didn't need to motivate them tonight. We needed to take a lesson we learned from last weekend, apply it to today, and we needed to execute our plan. So we laid out a simple plan and they executed great.

Then it manifests itself into free bases, extra-base hits, hitting with runners in scoring position and putting up 12 runs.

There were so many key at-bats in that deal tonight, it would be a game that you would want to put on a tape and show future teams, like, this is how we play offensive baseball at LSU.

Q. A lot was made this week about the conditions and the heat and everything that went into this week. But every step of the way your team looked to be the more conditioned of the two. What can you say about the work that Chris Martin has done with the staff and the work that the guys have put in to be ready for a spot like this in June?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, appreciate you bringing that up. Chris Martin is our strength and conditioning coach. Absolute difference maker. I hugged him on the field. That's what I said, "Dude, difference maker."

He has an unbelievable ability to connect with the players. He's super invested, unbelievable at player relationships, very intelligent. He was a very good college pitcher himself at a good program, so he understands culture, and he's got it going on.

And he's a big part of this thing. I made that hire personally. No other help, and we were super diligent in that because we needed a star in that position. Like, the SEC is the jungle. And we're only playing big, strong, physical well-conditioned beasts basically. It's a war every weekend.

We matched some of that in recruiting, but you have to match it there. And, like I said, the tough-and-together post, you develop a lot of toughness in the weight room.

And then as far as the conditions, man, that was hot. I stood on the top step, gave signs and talked to players and I was a little wiped out yesterday, to be honest with you.

So I started thinking about Luis Hernandez, what an effort that was. Steven Milam, what an effort that was. Kade Anderson, Anthony today -- man, it was not easy.

And I think all of that matters. But I just think it was toughness. And to us toughness is just being able to focus on your job no matter what else is going on. These guys did that and did it both mentally and physically.

Q. Two years ago you talked about how the arc of building that team was really started the season before in your first season at LSU. From the moment you won the national championship to now, how do you view that arc of change, I guess, and development? And how does that sort of, is that similar at all to the first time you had to do this?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I think there's some differences. I think the nature of college baseball has changed where you're building your team one year at a time. Obviously '23, it will go down as one of the greatest teams in college baseball history.

There, we had had some really good foundational pieces, and we had to get tasked to go get the areas that were deficient in the program. And we did that, with Paul and Tommy and on and on and on.

Then this freshman class, we started on literally the day I got the job. I hadn't even coached a game yet. And Derek Curiel was committed here. Casan Evans, September 1st is the first day you can call juniors. I probably called him every day the month of September.

I canceled a trip to go see one of my best friends' wedding to make sure he was coming back on a second visit and was committing.

Cade Arrambide flipped from another school. William Schmidt Phillip flipped from another school because they saw what was going on here.

And this summer, in the portal, hugging Zac Cowan, hugging Luis Hernandez, hugging Danny Dickinson, hugging Chris Stanfield -- it was like a two and a half week run last year where it's, like, man, I don't know how this is going to be. Then we had those guys, we got those guys.

And I'm so proud of them for stepping into this thing and not being promised or guaranteed anything, giving



everything they have. And it's just a true team. I think that's what I'm the most proud of. Three different collections of buckets where the players came from. One common theme, all winners, all winners.

Q. Jay got pinch-hit for Josh in the ninth, what's that relationship been like between those two right fielders, to a bigger extent, what has Josh brought in kind of like a mentorship role for the rest of the team this year?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, I think Jake had a phenomenal game tonight, too. Absolute difference maker. We felt it was a good match-up for him tonight. Stuck him in the 4-hole. And worked out great. They're best friends. They appear to be best friends.

And Josh Pearson, one of my favorite players of all time, and that's a long list, but the only guy that's been here for four years. Like I said, roster deal can be a roller coaster nowadays with the stability of that. Had him hit cleanup the first game of the year because I knew what I was going to get. Huge game yesterday because you know what you're going to get. But he's taking in the lineup and out of the lineup role and handled it like a champ. You just heard his teammates talk about him.

But, yeah, they're both great kids. This means something to them from being from here, and I really value that. And I'm sure happy we have both of them.

Q. Spoke with Anthony and Kade on the field after the game. And you've talked a lot about their competitive edge. Neither particularly happy with their last outing. How much of an advantage situation does that put you guys the next time you roll off a bus they toe a rubber that they'll be fueled by what they did last?

JAY JOHNSON: I'll take either of them on the mound any day of the week against anybody. It's that special character. Like yesterday I'm going, like, Kade you've got us 7 innings. This is a really good team, by the way. And I would like to congratulate coach Sabins and West Virginia on an outstanding season. He's a star. He'll be one of the best -- he's one of the best coaches in college baseball now in his first season. Buying stock in a program, buying at West Virginia.

But, yeah, it's been -- I forgot the question, I'm sorry. Anthony and Kade. My wife's back there, probably the next two most important people in my life. I'll take them anytime anywhere. And absolute winners. It's just a special competitor. Like hey we went out there, won a Super Regional. That's win 11, that's a small list in college baseball this year. Might be one. Might be one.

And to want more and to do more makes you proud as a coach. It's like we don't play well maybe but we play our best and win and we're pushing that we're not getting validated by what anybody says about us. We're not getting validated by even winning and losing as crazy as that sounds, we're validated by how we play. When your two best dudes are like that, unbelievable effect on the whole team.

Q. You were talking about Steven and how that was big-time stuff what he was able to do these two games in these huge moments. You alluded to it. How much do the other players in the lineup feed off what he's able to do at the plate and what kind of effect does that have on others, do you think?

JAY JOHNSON: I think it does. I think he's one of those guys, he's out at shortstop, you're paying attention to what happens because you might see something pretty awesome, and I feel like he has that presence in the box even at 5'8". And really, what he did is he just created runs for our team by his plate discipline and his ability to hit mistakes.

He's on base all the time the last two weeks. He drove in four runs tonight. And it's changed our team. Like, him playing to his full potential, playing to the blueprint that he needs to be the best player he can be is the reason why we've taken off offensively -- I won't even say taken off, gotten back to maybe where we were 34 games into this thing, largely because of his contribution. So they definitely do feed off of it. But I also think it's really tangible his plate zone discipline. He's on base, he's driving people in.

Q. You were talking about hugging the players in the portal, whatever. When I think of you I think of intentionality and tonight you were hugging all the parents. And you made an effort to really spend time with everybody that made this possible. Could you speak to the playoff when you see those people and the trust they put in to you to get the kids where they are and have it come to fruition?

JAY JOHNSON: Thanks for that question. This is an awesome group. They're putting trust in you with the most important thing in their life. And it's more than just baseball. It's more than Bear (phonetic) hitting homers. It's getting through the struggle. A lot goes into that.

You guys see if he goes 3-for-4 or if he punches out a couple times; I see what he's willing to do to put together that night out there like that, from a mental toughness standpoint and then a baseball, like, physical adjustment.



Talking to this dude on the phone the first time I talked to him and it's, like, yes, sir and coach and I will compete for you. If I end up coming to LSU you'll have the best competitor on the mound in college baseball. I think we can all agree that my man has delivered.

So I think it's just very grateful, and this is a cool team. They're a direct reflection of their parents. Pearsons, they're unbelievable, two solidest guys you could have. It's Bill and Anna. I think that's where it comes from. I feel that way about a lot of them.

Just how it all kind of came together is pretty awesome. It's a lot of work, man. It's a great place. We have a lot to offer. They don't just show up here anymore because everybody is invested in baseball because of Coach Bertman showed everybody what could be possible. Made it a lot harder on me.

Q. Just collectively offensively the crooked numbers yesterday, three-run homer, two grand slams, Milam clears the bases, Jake Brown -- when the offense is rolling and the crowd is rolling it seems like it's pretty impossible to beat.

JAY JOHNSON: It's pretty special. I'll remember these two weeks forever. Last Monday night staying with the team when we were down 5-1, and helping them stay energized, engaged in the game making it hard for them to come back, hard on the opposing pitcher.

Tonight we flat out earned it. In the second inning, there were two outs, nobody on base and we went walk, walk, walk to set up double, and added on from there with two-out hitting. Really good offensive performance.

I take a lot of pride in that. My side of the ball and 12 runs. And I know what this program was built on, the gorilla ball and homers and Omaha, they're a little harder to hit there now. But I know our fans like double-digit runs almost as much as their coach.

Q. This freshman class, you talked about it a little bit. You're not punching your ticket to Omaha without the performance of Casan Evans on Monday night and Cooper Williams tonight. How special is this freshman class?

JAY JOHNSON: Very special, and those guys, in particular, very different stories. Before he was working for us, Josh Simpson was a scout for the Rangers. He wasn't even hired. So we were just talking through guys that were in the junior class in Texas, and he's, like, Casan Evans. I really respect Josh's ability to evaluate. That's why I

brought him here.

I was like, okay, that's enough for me and just started on them and on them. It was a battle. It was like you name it, he visited there -- Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M and TCU. It was like six weeks in a row. I think he came to the football game where we got blasted by Tennessee. It's, like, this is not helping me out here.

And he had a couple more. And then in December of his junior year, he said, hey, I want to come back and chat with you. And that was awesome. We just were having lunch over at Walk-Ons and basically said he was coming here.

Cooper committed to Texas A&M his whole high school career. Then they had the coaching change. And we realized he had never signed a scholarship. So we obviously jumped right in there. We needed left-handed pitching. He's awesome.

Both those guys got the "it" part of it. They got the "it" part of it. That's the only way you can contribute in an environment like tonight. They have the talent but they're the right people, too.

Makes me very optimistic about the leadership of the pitching staff going forward. And they'll be on a mound in Nebraska this time around. And I'm really excited about that.

Q. Big picture kind of college baseball Omaha question here. Slow me down if you need to. But of the 13 SEC teams that entered the tournament, are you surprised that not only are there only two left, but there will be, like, six conferences represented one year after there was this narrative that NIL is going to make baseball so top heavy and favor the power conferences?

JAY JOHNSON: I think we have the best league. I don't think it's close either. And I don't think two weeks of baseball change that. I think LSU has a great team and we earned our way there. I think Arkansas is a great team and they earned their way there.

And a lot have lost tough games both at home and on the road.

But it's baseball. Football and basketball, big, fast people beat little fast people. In baseball you have a pitcher that determines everything. If a pitcher gets hot and rolls through a game and puts a team in the losers' bracket, then you have the psychological warfare if you lose one game and your season is over, and 18- and 21-year olds, unless they're trained properly, they're not built to deal with



that all the time and crazy stuff can happen.

So I think it's going to be awesome. I know we play Arkansas. That's one of the things that always look at on the selection-show day. Okay, if we're there, who is it going to be? No surprise, they're the most talented team in America.

Then I saw UCLA win, so they're on our side. A lot of games with Coach Savage. That will be fun. There's one more tomorrow to decide the other one, is that right? Do I have that right? Coastal went back? Is that right?

Q. Arizona.

JAY JOHNSON: Wildcats. Yeah. That's awesome. Chip Hale was really good to me when I was there. And I'm very happy for him and their team, and then Louisville, Dan McDonald, great coach. And who is the other one? Who won Florida State? Oregon State. All right. So three West Coast teams I'll be right at home.

Q. How much did you guys know about West Virginia ahead of the series, and what did you guys do to put yourself in the best spot against their lineup and pitching staff?

JAY JOHNSON: That's a great lineup. That's a great lineup. Couple of those left-handed hitters are really scary, and they're ultra competitive, and they obviously would not go away. And we knew the maturity.

They were in this position last year at North Carolina, and I feel like they used their experience well. Had a great season, Big 12 champions. And then on the pitching side of it, there obviously was something to Curran.

We had to grind hard how we were going to approach him yesterday. I thought our guys did a great job.

Kartsonas, every once in a while a guy has an off night. I think that was actually more of our hitters doing a really good job. We just didn't expand the zone on him in a way that maybe other teams had and just really put him on the hook a little bit.

And then our crowd got into it. And Chase Meyer came in, did a great job tonight. He's a really talented pitch pitcher. Like I said, Coach Sabins is a star, and they're going to be on the rise.

I don't know their roster as far as who is coming back or not, but nothing but respect for the Mountaineers.

Q. Two innings scored, four scoreless innings, you

come back score six in the sixth inning. What kind of energy did you see and what kind of shift and all of a sudden?

JAY JOHNSON: I think it was the game, baseball. We got off to a great start, scored six. They made a pitching change, went to Chase Meyer. He's throwing 97 with a hammer breaking ball. Really talented young man. But I felt like -- and you have to because they're in a win-or-go-home game. They were extending his pitch count maybe longer than he had.

And we were hitting the ball pretty hard. We lined out several times, kind of had some tough luck. Guys didn't get discouraged. And then I think when he finally kind of got tired, Cooper went out and got us the quick inning. He had to go out there quicker than he had previously.

And I thought we took advantage of that with free bases. Then huge hit by Chris Stanfield. Huge hit by Chris Stanfield. And that was a tough one. And he's been unbelievable. What an unbelievable season. But I actually thought about pinch-hitting right there because the side-arm guy's, left-handers are way better match-ups.

But I just had a good feeling, like he's hit these kind of guys well. I felt like he was focused and he's taking great at-bats for several games in a row, Regional, Super Regional. I thought that was huge.

Derek stealing second. And we got the error. And then Jake Brown, two-run homer. It was a great inning. Proud of our guys for just grinding out against a really good team.

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