

College World Series: Lexington Regional

Saturday, June 3, 2023
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Ball State Cardinals

Coach Rich Maloney

Nick Gregory

Adam Tellier

Ryan Peltier

Postgame Press Conference



And we just keep the same approach at-bat to at-bat, just put the ball in play, play hard. Like Coach said, 86 home runs this year, normally good things happen for us.

Q. That two-out rally is about as good as it gets offensively for a team, but then West Virginia comes back with a four-spot after that. How hard is it to deal with in the dugout? How do you mentally reset up? You think you got one over on them then they got one over on you.

RYAN PELTIER: In the moment whatever happens during the game we have to dig deep and find a way to respond to things like that. To West Virginia's credit they responded well to our big rally. After that we weren't really able to get anything going offensively. So credit to them.

Q. Nick, what made Aidan Major so effective what was difficult about what he was throwing today?

NICK GREGORY: A really good pitcher, like Coach said. I think he threw pitches for strikes. He was effective on getting ahead. Really effective. Threw strikes, got ahead.

Q. As infielders, how do you prepare for the team speed for West Virginia? Seemed pretty similar to Kentucky. Did a good job controlling the running game, but they busted down the line with hard 90s, similar like you guys do. What does it do to your internal clock as infielders? Do you try to stay within yourselves or do things have to speed up for you?

ADAM TELLIER: We practice every day and Coach has the clock on us. He's always trying to help us gauge our internal clock. It's something we practice day in and day out. Honestly it doesn't really matter from Kentucky to West Virginia to even slower teams. It's something that we work on in the offseason, for sure, and it's something that we're prepared for.

RYAN PELTIER: We have a second, third, short role of veterans in the infield. We've played a lot of ball in college and we know what kind of runners the hitters are. We have enough experience to kind of know what to do when we get the ball, and our coaches do a good job putting

West Virginia - 13, Ball State - 5

RICH MALONEY: I think our guys fought hard in both of the games. I thought when we got that rally we had, we had like six hits in a row or something, finally the bats started going.

To West Virginia's credit, that relief pitcher they brought in, Aidan Major, he was fantastic. We ran into two really good relief pitchers in this tournament that shut us down.

You've got to tip your hat off to them. Both of them -- Major gave one hit and the guy from Kentucky had no hits through five innings. And we have a pretty good offense. We had 86 home runs this year.

I've been doing this a long time. In the 30 years I've had this I only had one team that had more homers than that. These guys shut down a pretty potent offense.

But we had our moment. And it is what it is. You've got to tip your hat off to them. They stayed the course and they were able to play better than us today.

Q. Adam, you sparked that two-out rally that Coach mentioned with a hustle double out of the box. Were you looking to, or was that something that you just took advantage of the opportunity when it arose?

ADAM TELLIER: I was just trying to get the offense going. Put something in and play hard. I felt like we really took some great at-bats all day as a team. But like I said, even yesterday it was hard to find some green grass to get them in there.



together scouting reports for us.

Q. Assess where this Regional leaves the program, what you feel like your own legacy is to the program and what this meant to Ball State?

RYAN PELTIER: I think it meant a lot to Ball State and to Coach Maloney because he's been here, I don't know, 18 years. And this is the first one we came to under him here. He's had so much success here.

To be able to get on the national -- play on the national stage, we weren't able to show it and get any wins here, but moving forward this is the standard for the teams to come in the future to get here.

And now that the younger guys have experienced this, hopefully they can come back here and do some damage in these Regionals.

Q. From your vantage point in the dugout, what do you think of (indiscernible) Major so far?

COACH MALONEY: I think he had three pitches for strike, and he has a power slider. Our guys were having trouble laying off it. His fastball he's running at low 90s, up to 93.

I just thought he did a really good job. Our guys didn't have an answer to that. We didn't have a lot of good quality at-bats. Before that we had a lot. Even early in the game we had our moments where we hit a couple of liners to third, right off the bat. The third baseman made a great catch on Pelts to start the game.

And later on Justin Conant hit a liner to third. We strung those hits together, which was a real positive. Took the lead.

Shut-down innings we talk about all the time. There's moments in a game where momentum really carries the game. And we had a shot -- we pulled back. We got to a lead. And to West Virginia's credit, like the boys said, they answered back. We weren't able to shut them down.

We needed to shut them down at that moment. That was the moment of the game. And you have those, especially when you're playing high-level baseball. There's going to be a few moments where either a guy gets a timely hit, the pitcher makes the pitch at the right time. A player makes a play at the right time.

And if you miss those moments, the margins are so tight then the momentum shifts. That was our moment. We had a moment. We just didn't finish it in that moment.

And to West Virginia's credit they answered back like the guys did. We've done that all year. That's why we've had a successful season is because our team has answered back many times over. Done it to other teams. We go it done to us today.

Q. You talked a little bit yesterday about the first-rounders you've had, the success that the program has had. Yet Ryan Peltier is the first Gold Glove player in the history of the program. Probably just played his last collegiate game. What has he meant to the program and to you as a coach?

COACH MALONEY: Well, I would just say all these kids, we -- pardon me. We run the program as family. So our culture is tight. It's probably the strength of our program.

These are tears of joy, not of sadness. You ask kids to buy in. You ask them to give everything they have. You work with them every day. And it's a result-driven industry. But at the same token, the real result is that, what you've just seen.

You saw a kid who came here as a shortstop. We change him into a third baseman. He works his tail off. First couple of years in his career has very limited success. Struggles hitting, is an average fielder, but he keeps grinding it out. We keep working, spending all this time together.

So the infielder -- I coach the infielders, so it's a little different because you get to spend so much time with them. And the passion that I had as a fielder and the coaches I had before me, I try to give that to these kids. And they buy in.

And Ryan, to his credit, developed into this fabulous player. He deserves a shot to play at the next level. But to watch a kid grow from where we get them to where they are now as an older player and to have success like he's had, it's extra special.

That's why you coach. You coach for the relationships. I understand that you've got to win and all that -- and we've won our fair share. But the joy of coaching is seeing guys develop. Seeing them realize their goals. Seeing them develop as great teammates.

In our program we've got a 3.4 cumulative grade-point average. So we're knocking it out of the park in all facets. I'm not saying that as bragging but it's our culture. The guys buy in, we recruit good kids from good families. They work really hard and for the most part they get a lot better.

Because we don't get the guy that often is already the

polished player. For a mid-major to be really successful, you've got to take kids and develop them. And sometimes they develop all at the right time. And sometimes you have them all in the house but they're not quite developed at the right time.

So we haven't been able to have the depth that it takes to be over the top. We've been close but we just hadn't -- and the NCAA, the way the rules are -- it's tough for Mid-American Conference teams because many times over we had two teams in the league who are really worthy of playing in the tournament but haven't been given the opportunity.

If you're only getting one guy in the party all the time -- these kids, first time they had experienced it. Had they experienced it two years ago, when we should have got in, in my humble opinion, they might have had a different outcome.

Because it's always like you've got to experience something first. So you're hoping you defy the odds on that, but the truth of the matter, this is the first time they've got to play in this kind of a setting. It was great. It was a great experience. They'll never forget it.

It was disappointing we didn't get the result we wanted. But nevertheless I thought we were right there in both the games.

So getting back to Ryan, I just think Ryan's development, along with the other guys -- watching Adam Tellier's development, when I got him he was 6-3, 150 pounds. He's a pro prospect now.

These guys have taken second base so many times over, it's been amazing, hustle plays. Several of them that we've had. He didn't understand your questioning but I know what you're getting at. That was an awesome play. That's how he plays.

Pelt did it probably six, seven times himself. But we have a lot of guys that have done that. So I just think that was instinctive, that's kind of like, we celebrate the fact when they take the base like that.

But to watch Telly grow the way he's grown. And watch Tex, big Tex, grow as a player -- when we recruited him, this tells you something about big Tex. Big Tex, in his first year, we were probably -- there's probably only four or five games left in the first year, I mean four or five weekends. And we were redshirting him. All of a sudden he was showing well in the live hitting and mid-week. Not against mid-week competition, practice.

Then all of a sudden we had an injury or something and I asked Tex, we've got a nonconference series coming up. I hate to pitch you now because you're going to blow a year. But at the same token, maybe you'll get to pitch 10 innings this year, maybe you won't. I don't know. I'm struggling with it. So I asked him, what do you do?

I called his dad up. I called his dad, hey, I'm mixed on this one. The kid's showing well. He's developing. Should we do this or not? He said we've all got to make this decision together.

Scott told him, the dad said, I wouldn't do it, to his son. But he said, son, you've got to grow into a man now. It's your call.

Tex told me, I want to pitch. That dude pitched in that weekend and then he went the next four weekends, he started, and then he went all the rest he's been our starting pitcher. But it's development.

So what we're talking about is development here, because like I say, we're not getting the star player most of the time right out of the chute. We're getting guys we have to grow.

And we take great pride in it. We've done it for a long, long time. And those guys are Tellier, Peltier, Tex and I could talk so many others. That's what they've done.

Q. College baseball in the state of Indiana is in a good place. Two teams here, Indiana State hosting a Regional. Evansville, Purdue, Notre Dame have had their moments in recent years. What's it mean to you (indiscernible) around Ball State for so long to put Ball State in that conversation, especially with the stadium being fixed up a few years ago, too, a good step for the program. This moment isn't great but in a way it is. How do you --

COACH MALONEY: Thank you for saying that. We've always been recognized nationally because of the top prospects we've had. We just haven't been on the national scene. But we're well respected in the industry. We've beaten a lot of giants, many times over.

With that being said, this was a step that was -- it's uncanny it never happened before this. I mean, it really is. Really strange, because we've been in the finals several times over. And it's been really hard not to be in this party.

But with that being said, this was a big step. And there's a lot of really good schools in the state of Indiana. And it's amazing for a state the size it is that it's produced that much good baseball. And we're certainly proud of our institution, proud of our players, past, and ones that we

currently have.

We had three big leaguers up at one point this year. It's possible we have four or five. Think about that for a minute. Think about it, for a team that was kind of a little unknown, not too many mid-majors can spout that off.

We have two in the wings right now getting pretty close. And we've had up to three. We got two in the Big Leagues right now. I think it's possible four or five at some point this year, which is really special.

And those guys, by the way, talking about our players, the first-rounders that came to Ball State, all but one of them, Bryan Bullington was the only one that was drafted out of high school. And he was drafted like 38th, 39th round.

So for me it's great, that means we've developed players. And we take pride in developing people because at the end of the day you're going to play baseball for a period of time. By the time you're 30 you're out of baseball, almost 100 percent, if you make it to 30.

The reality life after baseball. That's why we go to college and teach these kids and teach them to be great teammates. That's the beauty of coaching. We're highly competitive. It's painful right now because we really felt like coming into this we had a real shot.

I think if we win the first game, things bounce a little different, we score in that first inning, maybe, maybe we upset Kentucky. And then all of a sudden you're in a different place. But that's the beauty of baseball and we weren't able to get it done.

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