

College World Series: Lexington Regional

Saturday, June 3, 2023
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

West Virginia Mountaineers
Coach Randy Mazey

J.J. Wetherholt
Logan Sauve

Aidan Major

Postgame Press Conference



West Virginia - 13, Ball State - 5

COACH MAZEY: Hey, guys. Much happier to see you guys today, right? We hadn't felt this good in a little while. But told the guys after the game yesterday, I've been doing this a long time. I've seen a lot of teams that lost the first game of a Regional, came back and win it. You can't do that until you win one.

If you're going to lose a game in the Regional and win it through the losers' bracket, actually the game to lose is game one. If you can win game two, now our next game we'll be playing somebody who feels like we did yesterday coming off a loss. And our guys are coming off a win.

So just naturally you're going to feel better going into that game. And if you can win the next one and it turns into a doubleheader situation, then you just look for heroes, man. In a tournament like this, you have to have heroes that you weren't expecting to be heroes.

So that could come from anybody. So we have a team full of guys who will go to bed tonight expecting to be a hero in the next couple of days. We're feeling pretty good right now.

Q. J.J., can you talk about your home run and what you were looking for in that first pitch?

J.J. WETHERHOLT: Honestly, I just felt pretty comfortable off of him off my first at-bat. I was seeing his stuff pretty well. I was just looking for anything to hit and thankfully he gave me the best pitch to hit first pitch. And that was pretty much it. Just see something good over the plate and put a good swing on it.

Q. Aidan, really good outing for you today. What was the difference and what do you think made you so successful out there?

AIDAN MAJOR: The difference for me today was starting ahead of hitters. I think, I haven't looked at it officially yet or anything, but I think there's only two hitters the entire outing that I was behind in the count, maybe three.

But being able to get ahead and get to my off-speed stuff and be ahead and be able to set the next pitch up with whatever that pitch is was huge for me today.

Q. Aidan, walk me through what your repertoire is, what you feel you had working best today?

AIDAN MAJOR: Repertoire for me is fastball, slider, changeup. And really today all three were working today. I was able to go to any of the three in any count. Whether it was -- up, down, even. It didn't matter.

Definitely starting ahead really helped me, being able to land the changeup and the slider early in counts and being able to show the fastball late.

It's kind of what we tried to do all year. And today I was able to execute and we were on the same page all day. So that was a huge help.

Q. Logan, yesterday, hitting at the bottom of the order, near the bottom of the order, had some really good at-bats. Today you were bumped up and you were a big part of today's win. Does it change your approach where you're hitting in the order, or do you have the same methodology each time you go to the plate?

LOGAN SAUVE: I would say I have the same method going in every at-bat. At the end of the day it's just a game. So wherever Coach puts me in the lineup, I just try to execute and do my job.

Q. Logan, when you hear about this change, does that spark any thoughts? Do you talk to anybody, or how do you handle that?



LOGAN SAUVE: I didn't know until they put the lineup up right when we got in the dugout. We don't know anything. We don't talk to anybody until game time.

Q. Logan, can you talk about your home run? You just tied the game, you have Tevin out there. What was your approach and how did you get it opposite field like that?

LOGAN SAUVE: My first two at-bats weren't good. I watched a lot of pitches. I went into my third at-bat just be aggressive. When I got a fastball, just jump on it. And I did.

Q. J.J., when they jump out with another big inning, is there any feeling of, oh, man, here this goes again? No matter how games have gone, they're trending in the same way. Any thought of that?

J.J. WETHERHOLT: I think you can think about that for about five seconds, look at it like that, like, oh my, this stinks. But once you get in the dugout to hit, the inning is over, turn the scoreboard over and have good at-bats. And we did a good job at doing that.

Q. Did you notice the wind? Obviously yesterday and today, it's blowing out to right field. You can get it out there and it's going to ride it a little bit. Does it change what you're looking for sometimes?

J.J. WETHERHOLT: We try not to play into the wind because it's too hard to control exactly where you're going to hit it.

Thankfully a lot of our lofted stuff was to right field, so that was a good sign. It kind of helped us out. But we're not thinking, the wind is blowing to right, let's hit it to the right.

Q. Was there any point in this game where you looked at each other, this is the team like we played like the first three-fourths of there season?

LOGAN SAUVE: I think so. Just walking through the dugout you could tell our energy was a lot better today. And once we jumped up by five, six, seven runs, everybody knew this is the team we were.

J.J. WETHERHOLT: To add to that, I think after the game doing like our winning handshakes and stuff we haven't done that in a while, that's where it clicked this is what it feels like to win again. That's what we'll be going for tomorrow.

Q. Coach talked about different pitchers on the staff

understanding their roles. (Indiscernible) and yours bounced around a little bit sometimes this year. Is there a process you went through to realize, hey, this is what I'd rather do to help this team be successful?

AIDAN MAJOR: Yes, it's just going to work every single day. There's always something you can get better at. There's always something can you do to get more comfortable, whatever it might be, whether it's a start or relief, close. I've done it all.

It's about doing the same thing, sticking to the same routine, sticking with what's worked in the past. And sometimes it's going to work. Sometimes it's not going to work. So just sticking to it and today was a good day for me.

Q. Was that a hero performance out of Aidan, and only got three innings out of Ben, for him to come in pitch for five --

COACH MAZEY: Sure was. We pitched Hagaman and Reed yesterday. So ideally you wouldn't want to pitch either of those guys today, give them a day's rest so they can be the hero tomorrow.

So not just winning the game but saving all those other guys at the back of the bullpen was really important. That's kind of a unique role for him. What he did today is what he's done a bunch this year, come in when the starter gets in a little bit of trouble.

He's got a history of being the starting pitcher so he can get into a pretty deep pitch count. So bringing him in in the third or fourth and expecting him to finish the game is something he's pretty capable of doing.

Q. You mentioned yesterday's game you were going to consider jumping the batting order around. When you go through identifying that, was it matchups, obviously recent performance a little bit? What made you settle on Logan prop him up to the 2-spot?

COACH MAZEY: He's been pretty steady. You've seen him play. He's hit so many balls to the warning track this year. He could really have eight or 10 homers. He normally doesn't strike out much. He can hit the ball behind runners when they're on first or second.

He really is a prototypical 2-hole guy for those reasons. He doesn't reason great. But we just want to get our best hitters to the plate as much as you can.

If you look at over the course of the season, the guys that hit first and second in the lineup will get 15 or 20 more



at-bats than the guys that hit at the bottom just because the game has to end at some point and somebody gets left in the on-deck circle.

He's swinging a pretty hot bat. And thankfully Abner Doubleday made the field 90 degrees today. If he would have made it 75 degrees, some of those balls would have been foul. That right field corner was pretty good to us today. But we've done that. He's done that. Dayne's done that. Barry's done that. Wallace has done that. We have some guys with some opposite field power.

Q. Do you feel you have the offense back on track, not with just the home runs but a little more aggressive on the base paths?

COACH MAZEY: You know, we kind of take what they give us. We don't run just to run, we run when we need to run. There were some opportunities to run today.

Just because you do that changes the way pitchers pitch to you. They get a little worried about a guy on first base and all of a sudden you get a fastball to hit instead of a breaking ball or tries to be too quick to the plate and misses in the middle.

That has a lot to do with why we hit the homers, is the fact we came out running a little bit. Even when J.J. got thrown out in the first inning, at least the pitcher knows, hey, when they get over there I've got to pay attention to two things here instead of one. So it helps in a lot of different ways.

Q. Was there a point in this game where the way they were performing kind of reminded you of the team you saw the first 40 some games this season?

COACH MAZEY: When the game ended and the Mountaineers, that reminded me of this season. Because we've done that a lot. Haven't done it a lot lately. But that just feels great to get in that huddle out there again.

About a third of the way into the season, I told them we're not going to huddle up after we lose a game, because after you lose a game and people are emotional, sometimes you get mad at people and say things you don't want to say.

So when we lose a game, we don't huddle up in the outfield like most teams. We wait until the following day until Coach Mazey gets a good night sleep, if he gets one, so I can say the right thing.

We haven't huddled up much lately. But ever since we started doing that at the midway point, we started winning a lot. But it's nice to get back together with them again and everybody's feeling good. Everybody said the same thing.

You know, let us win one, you let us win one, we'll get a chance of getting on a roll here.

I think everybody is feeling good. Dayne Leonard and J.J. both wore each other's batting practice tops today by accident. So they'll be doing that again tomorrow. So we're going to try and stick to the routine that's working.

Q. You'll have some scouts thinking J.J. is a switch hitter?

COACH MAZEY: I know, right? I don't care at this point. (Laughter). It's pretty easy to identify J.J. when he's standing in the box.

Q. Good point. Speaking of Dayne, another good showing from him at the plate. What are you seeing from the dugout about his at-bats this weekend?

COACH MAZEY: When you juggle the lineup, you move Logan up from the 9-hole to the 2-spot, that's a different mentality doing that, and it's also different for Dayne. Dayne was in our 3 and 4-hole when the season started. You put him down at eighth and it takes some pressure off of him. They don't have to hit homers in the 8-hole, just have to get on base and do my thing.

And sometimes that works that way too. So you don't put guys in spots on the lineup for the same reason all the time. You just move them around to take pressure off of them and try and get -- never put a slow guy in front of a fast guy, that type of thing.

So I was just about this close to leading J.J. off and putting the other eight names in a hat and just letting them draw it out of there, because it really doesn't matter because all the guys in our lineup have hit.

Dayne's hit third, fourth and eighth. Barry hit seventh, hit lead-off, hit third. Our guys, we don't have superstars, other than J.J. We just have a bunch of guys that are role players and just try and grind out at-bats and get on base.

Some of them are hot some days. Some of them aren't. But you hope they all get hot at the same time.

Q. Same idea for slot, Tevin back before he started in the 9-hole, take a little bit of pressure off, put him back in the turnaround spot with J.J.?

COACH MAZEY: You know, Tevin's deal was hitting in front of J.J. If J.J. is second, Tevin's first, he's in front of J.J. If J.J. is first, that means Tevin's ninth. You put him ninth, and he probably takes a deep breath, relaxes, gets on base five times today. So it doesn't always work that

way. But it sure did work out today.

Q. Any idea who you're pitching tomorrow?

COACH MAZEY: Next question, please. I do not. Aidan Major is not starting tomorrow. We'll talk about that and see who the options are. But we've got -- that's the reason we started a lot of different guys in those mid-week games this year, to give a lot of different guys experience because we knew this day was coming, where somebody was going to have to get a start and you didn't want it to be their first start.

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