

College World Series: Lexington Regional

Friday, May 31, 2024

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Indiana State Sycamores

Coach Mitch Hannahs

Zach Davidson

Randal Diaz

Postgame Press Conference



Illinois - 4, Indiana State - 1

MITCH HANNAHS: Not a lot to say, really. I think Crowder would have beaten a lot of teams in the country tonight. I thought he was excellent. He threw two pitches where he wanted early. He added the change later. And was just on. He was in when he wanted to be and away when he wanted to be.

Nobody has really stuck it to our offense like that all year. I just thought it was the fact that he controlled the day. And that's really all I have.

Q. Randal, from your perspective, Crowder, the home run off of him, what made him tough today?

RANDAL DIAZ: He was attacking the zone. He was spotting every pitch that he wanted to spot. And it was, like, we just gotta do a better job attacking the pitches. That's why everything that he was doing was attacking the zone and get (indiscernible) early and get us out of balance.

Q. Randal, what was the mood in the dugout among the offensive players trying to get a rebound on Crowder? Was there any discussion in the dugout about anything that could be done to try to solve it?

RANDAL DIAZ: I think we need to do a better job to keep the energy in the dugout. It's, like, I feel guys, including me, we weren't dialing that up when they scored two runs. We need to do a better job (indiscernible), just bounce back more quicker, you know.

Q. Zach, you're no stranger to throwing multiple innings out of the pen. This is your first start of the season. How did that change your preparation for this

outing as opposed to coming out of the pen?

ZACH DAVIDSON: I didn't really change much. I kind of did what I usually do. Short game of catch and be ready to go out there.

Q. What did you think was working today or were there any pitches that weren't working for you today, and what worked better in (indiscernible)?

ZACH DAVIDSON: I think I was struggling a lot more with the fastball. Like, the third inning I was just starting to hit that curveball. I was able to be throw it for a strike, and that's what helped me out to get to those last couple of innings.

Q. Randal, as a leader of the offense and leader of infield, the short turnaround tomorrow, what do you tell the team to get them ready for tomorrow?

RANDAL DIAZ: We need to come to the field like with all the energy that we need to be like since the beginning, since BP, since we got out of the bus. I'll make sure we bounce back tomorrow.

Q. What was your sense of the dugout of batters trying to get a handle on Crowder?

MITCH HANNAHS: I think when a guy's got some velocity and he's landing and hitting spots, we talked about doing a better job of getting on top of the baseball. I think a lot of guys were getting beat -- he did a good job mixing in, mixing in a breaking ball. And then he was cutting his fastball once in a while. I don't know if it was by accident but I think it certainly helped him.

You look out there and it sure looked like it had some cut away and it was 92, I think. And then you'd see 94, 95 on the four-seamer. I think he did just a enough by cutting it -- whether it was done on purpose or not -- of really keeping us off balance.

I didn't feel like he really came in a lot. And then her tried to come in on Diaz and he hit the home run. From that point he pretty much stayed away.

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I think from my perspective it was trying to figure out how to handle the bullpen and not blow it all, not use it all when you're not scoring runs, trying to figure out a way to stay in the game.

It's a task when you walk nine people, but we were just trying to keep running some guys through there and recycle some guys through to try to keep it at least to one- or two-run game.

Q. Perhaps it's academic, but Crowder early in the game got ahead in counts. I think he was ahead of the first of the eight or nine batters. How much do you think that helped his whole outing a little bit? He never really had to work too hard through those at-bats?

MITCH HANNAHS: I think the ability to ram pitches -- I don't know if you guys kept track. I was trying to, but I think it was -- it might have been the sixth or seventh inning before he missed up. And when you see that, you know the guy's on that day and he's moving it in and out.

But he wasn't missing a lot. When he missed, he was missing into the shadow zones or missing into good areas. He wasn't missing back to our barrels. That's what made him so effective.

When he missed, he missed away from barrels. And he just didn't miss up until it was the sixth or seventh. I don't know in that because he's 5-6. But in terms of the guys I watched he didn't miss up.

Q. Could you talk about the decision to go with Zach today and what played into that?

MITCH HANNAHS: Well, the last -- if you followed us the last month, we've struggled to get the first four, five innings. So we just flipped it tonight. The thought was if we could get Zach for four or five and flipped him and Jared, it might be beneficial to us.

I really wanted to get a little more out of Pruitt but he was erratic. We were hoping to get two innings out of him. That caught us a little bit.

Q. Is Cutts the guy tomorrow?

MITCH HANNAHS: No, we'll throw Hayden tomorrow.

Q. You guys have lost Friday games all season and bounced back. Staring down an 0-1 and (indiscernible) elimination tomorrow. How do you think this team will bounce back tomorrow?

MITCH HANNAHS: We'll find out. Obviously we've just had some gaps offensively that the guys need to pick it up for us. It seems like we've had a few guys since the conference tournament started that just haven't really been swinging it. It seems like that has cost us a little bit.

I just felt like those guys that haven't been swinging it as well are in a hurry. They're not taking pitches. They're not seeing pitches. They're up there trying to get the AB over with. And that really helped Crowder, too, because I think that section of guys, I thought there were two or three really quick innings.

Q. Crowder's 32nd career start. (Indiscernible). Was it the cutter that just kind of surprised your guys more than anything? Or was there something specific he was doing that you didn't have a book on?

MITCH HANNAHS: No, we faced him -- he came in in relief last year in our place in about the seventh or eighth inning. And we ended up playing a 15-inning game. And Crowder pitched all of it. We were fortunate we hit a walk-off home run against him in the 15th.

So we've seen him before. We know what he's capable of. I think you'd have to ask Dan in terms of his consistency over time. But I've seen him a few times really, really good like that.

We're an hour apart and we see each other in the fall and the spring twice. We definitely knew what he was capable of and knew if we let him settle in tonight we would have our hands full.

I think the big thing for me. I know you guys probably saw it too, his composure on the mound was excellent tonight. You could just tell that he was ready to go, he was in the fight and we were going to get his best.

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