

College World Series: Lexington Regional

Sunday, June 2, 2024
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Indiana State Sycamores

Mitcvh Hannahs

Brennyn Cutts

Postgame Press Conference



Indiana State 13, Illinois 2

MITCH HANNAHS: Obviously when you get to this point of the tournament you need to get good starts on the mound. That is imperative. I thought Brennyn was absolutely dominant today. I thought he commanded the zone both sides, threw three pitches where we wanted, when we wanted, and I thought he was the difference.

We had some opportunity offensively. I felt like we took advantage of it, which has plagued us a little bit through the tournament, conference tournament and this one so far. So overall just really pleased with the effort.

Q. Brennyn, in your own terms, speak to what was working well for you and what felt comfortable out there?

BRENNYN CUTTS: Just getting ahead of hitters. Getting that strike 1 really works and then just moving on from there. And then what Coach said, throwing three pitches for strikes whenever, moving the fastball in and out.

Q. How does your confidence expand on itself as you're going well to start the game, especially after some outings that haven't gone as well?

BRENNYN CUTTS: Yeah, just getting that first inning, second inning under my belt and then coming in, that third inning after all those runs, I didn't feel like I could throw it over the plate and just kind of let them get themselves out and kind of work from there.

Pretty much just attacking the zone really. That's all it comes down to.

Q. You go out there and the rain comes down then go finish the game. Take me through the delay.

BRENNYN CUTTS: Yeah, I was pretty loose. Obviously I was a little bit gassed, but I just kept staying within myself, not trying to do too much, and then just kind of let stuff play.

MITCH HANNAHS: He was busting my chops for calling 2-2 fastball to Moreman there.

BRENNYN CUTTS: That's all right. We were up.

Q. You also got three double play balls, and that one in the seventh inning was important. To get something out of that, it becomes a different game. Talk about the defense behind you today. You were able to reduce those ground outs but they did some work, too.

BRENNYN CUTTS: Yeah, that's another thing that gave me that confidence. You don't have to be perfect all the time. You can just kind of work the corners but you can just kind of let it play a little bit more and then let them pound on the ground because I know our defense is one of the best defenses in the country.

I know that for a fact. It just gives you all the confidence in the world.

Q. Talk about just the satisfaction of when a team needs a start like this, there's no margin for error and you delivered.

BRENNYN CUTTS: It feels great because I've been preparing for this all season, all fall, all winter, and I didn't want to come out of the game. I knew from that first pitch, I was like, I don't want to come out. It's big for the team, and we've just got to keep it rolling into the next game.

Q. Brennyn, when you face an Illinois team that's just so based in power in the home run ball, does it change your game plan on the mound or what you're trying to accomplish, especially early on?

BRENNYN CUTTS: I don't think so. I think I just let things work a little bit more, let me body work, let the pitches work, don't try to do too much. And it helps that, like I said earlier, the runs, getting those runs early, and then you can



kind of just attack them a little more.

It's not going to hurt you, so you can pretty much just throw down the middle and just let it work.

Q. Did having that book on Illinois, having maybe seen them before in your career, did that help, that it's not just video that you're looking at?

BRENNYN CUTTS: Yeah, I don't know how many times I've faced them in my career just on the mid-week. But just doing my thing really. I know Coach has a good game plan going into it, so I've just got to execute.

Q. Coach, not many teams today have the luxury of throwing a fresh conference pitcher of the year on Sunday. What does his performance mean to you when you're trying to win two more games after this one and he eats nine innings for you?

MITCH HANNAHS: Sure. I think the ammo of our team, you go back and look at the conference series that we won, what we've tried to do is get better as the weekend goes on the mound.

It's well-documented that we've lost Friday plenty of times and we've lost that first game plenty of times. But it's really good to have him back there.

I think the really big thing for him, he made an adjustment about two weeks ago, he was getting his hands really tight to his body and was pulling off everything, and he got his hands up off.

To have someone come and tell you, hey, this is what you're doing and then to be able to take it and make the adjustment and get back on track, that's not an easy thing to do, because I know from a confidence standpoint he was really fighting himself.

It was a simple mechanical thing that he and Coach Hancock went to work on the pen, in the pen, and I think that really, really helped him.

We didn't know what we would get. We saw flashes of it then in the NBC tournament, but that's the guy that we watched all year. So it was great to see him have a day like that, and it was obviously something that our team needed.

Q. Complementary baseball, Mitch, a seven-run third inning didn't help his cause. Obviously they go hand in hand, but how much that really helps Brennyn to go out there and have a leader.

MITCH HANNAHS: Well, it's extremely important, and I think what happens, and we talk to our team about this, we're at a point now where opportunities are few and far between when you play good people, and when you get them, you have to take advantage.

I thought our offense got some opportunity there in the third inning and we took advantage, except for the two-out, two-strike base hit that we got thrown out on at the plate that I wasn't overly pleased with, because obviously we should've right on the swing.

But for the most part, I think taking advantage of that and getting a guy that has struggled a little bit somewhat of a comfort zone.

But the other thing is, yeah, we are familiar with Illinois and we know how quickly they ignite and we know how good offensively they are. Fortunately when they had some opportunity, they hit some balls right at us and we were able to get some double plays, and I think that was really important to him through those middle innings, and then obviously in the seventh, the comebacker was huge.

Q. Considering where you are on the weekend, it's not bad going into the final one or two games. What is the pitching plan for tonight?

MITCH HANNAHS: I'm not 100 percent sure yet. We'll talk about it when we get back out there. Obviously I've had some ideas of who we would go with and how we would play the game. If it's something that we try to shorten the game, I don't know yet.

Obviously strong candidate would be Gilley to start, but other than that, I'm just not 100 percent sure.

Q. After yesterday's game you expressed some frustrations with getting to an early lead, not being able to put them away. Today there might have been some breaks in scoring in the middle innings but you applied pressure and kept your foot on the gas the whole day. How do you feel about the offensive performance?

MITCH HANNAHS: Well, even those innings where we didn't score, I thought we were getting good barrels. I thought we were swinging the bat very well. This is a momentum-driven sport, and when you start seeing guy after guy after guy starting to put good swings on, you feel really good. Even though we weren't scoring, I still felt good about our offense today.

I thought yesterday when we went into the lull a little bit, we weren't barreling anything. It just seemed like we were

giving away at-bat after at-bat after at-bat. I thought today we did a better job of maximizing our at-bats.

Q. I was going to ask you how you guys were able to flush the opening game and win two in a row and especially to do what you did offensively today.

MITCH HANNAHS: I think obviously we've been through it a lot during the year. I think that helps. I think the other thing is you have to have -- I look back at our season, and I think in February and March, and we talked about this after the Game 1 loss, I thought we played solid baseball in April. I thought we played really well. I thought we had a really good month in April.

I thought the only thing that kept us afloat in May was our toughness, our grit, and I think going through some of those struggles in early May really helped and helps in a situation like this.

Q. You likely will face a pretty charged atmosphere tonight. Does last year's experience at LSU have any value?

MITCH HANNAHS: Absolutely. I think obviously when you're playing in these type of atmospheres similar to TCU last year, you can't let someone go on a run. You can't let them electrify the crowd. You've got to do anything you can to minimize it. Obviously there's a home-field advantage 7,000, 8,000 people in and they're loud, which we found out at TCU last year.

Thank goodness there are no metal bleachers here they're pounding their feet on right behind us. And it helps to have a veteran club, because the communication becomes very difficult from the dugout.

Q. How good is it for the conference? You guys have pushed this far and Evansville have had --

MITCH HANNAHS: We knew Evansville were good. I think the only people who didn't know Evansville was good were on the committee. We knew Evansville was good. They're as good as anybody we've seen. They can absolutely swing it. They can pitch it. They're going to be a tough out.

They got us in the conference tournament in a good game. We lost and got into that losers' bracket. But I think sometimes you watch clubs that you see every week on TV and you don't see a lot of the clubs like our league.

But I can tell you Evansville is a very good team. If they end up winning that and whoever draws them -- I think it would be Tennessee in the super -- tune in, because it'll be

a good series.

Q. I'm sure you've been asked this all year, but for Brennyn coming from a small town in Illinois being able to go from a freshman to midweek to where he is now this year, did you see that when you were recruiting him or has he made a leap that you didn't see coming?

MITCH HANNAHS: I think when you play in our area of the world, you have to have four quality starters. You have to have somebody to win those midweek games. A lot of times those are huge RPI games, so I considered even last year our midweek starter more important than our three starter in conference.

He's thrown a lot of those games against a lot of good teams, a lot of good offenses, whether it be Illinois or Indiana. Vanderbilt, he's thrown there a few times.

I think he came in with really good command, and he came in with really good poise, and I think that's underestimated today. These young people that were raised right and they come in with a really good package to build on, I wish I could say we've done a lot to enhance his career, but the reality is he came in with a really strong foundation from his family. He had a brother that played Division I baseball, and even though he was in Cumberland, Illinois, which no one here has ever heard of and grew up in Illinois, unless you're from Illinois.

He had a really good foundation at home and was raised right and was taught the game correctly. So he came in throwing strikes and hitting spots.

If there's one thing that I think Coach Hancock has really enhanced with him, it's the slider. He really couldn't spin it much when he first got to us but that would be the biggest difference that I see.

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