

# College World Series: Lexington Regional

Sunday, June 2, 2024  
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

**Indiana State Sycamores**  
**Coach Mitch Hannahs**  
**Grant Magill**  
**Randal Diaz**  
**Mike Sears**

Postgame Press Conference

Kentucky - 5, Indiana State - 0

MITCH HANNAHS: In regard to the game, I thought we really had a tough time taking the crowd out of it. I thought they got those early runs, and we were chasing 3. I thought we had a couple opportunities, obviously, to dig into that. We didn't get it done. We give Kentucky credit.

I thought they made nice plays in some of those situations. I thought Moore really made some good pitches, some quality pitches in a couple of those jams that he kind of got himself into, but he made a really good series of pitches on Diaz and then the diving play by the shortstop in left-center, and then a good series against Hernandez.

In regards to game, they beat us. They played well. They have a nice club. They play all phases of the game.

In regard to the season, I'm really proud of my guys. I thought they battled from the first time they stepped on campus in August until now. It's been an absolutely great group to coach. They've allowed us to coach them hard. What I mean by that is we've just been honest with them and they take constructive criticism and they've been a pleasure.

They've done a lot for our program. And it's going to be really tough to see this group leave us.

**Q. Mike, just to illustrate the frustration, I mean there were opportunities to break through, but you guys weren't able to do it. What was the level of frustration through the game?**

MIKE SEARS: Throughout the game, we just -- obviously



you could kind of see the frustration and everything that we hit hard was kind of right at them. And like Coach said, the shortstop, he made an amazing play out in left-center field. That could have been a hit and next thing you know bases are loaded.

Those kind of plays are the ones that can make or break a game. It's frustrating when that happens and then you get a strikeout and the crowd goes crazy.

The momentum, we could just never get it on our side. And that was definitely frustrating.

**Q. Randal, you heard the words that coach Hannah said about the season. It's earlier than you wanted to end it but and it's hard to put it in perspective this soon after it ended but how do you kind of put it in perspective and demonstrate some the pride in what you guys did?**

RANDAL DIAZ: Yes, I'm really proud of my teammates. Right now I am not even thinking that we just lost; I'm just thinking about my family in the dugout. It's really hard for me to just see them leave and all that.

I've been learning a lot with my teammates. I just can't say -- I'm just thinking about my family right here.

**Q. Grant, kind of the same sentiment -- it hurts because this run you've been on for a few years has been so good, right?**

GRANT MAGILL: Yeah, just the kind of the relationships you get to make on teams that make regionals and a super last year. You get so close with these guys and now it's obviously the kind of the end. So that end-of-the-game emotion, it's different, it's a whole lot different than, say, last year knowing we could have a chance to come back.

But the emotion isn't because we lost; it's because those relationships, the ability to play on this stage, you know, we don't have it anymore.

I'm just so grateful that I was able to make those relationships and I was able to grow as a player under

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Coach Hannahs and all the other coaches. They've built me from the ground up, and I'm so grateful for everything they've done for me.

**Q. Mike, you've been with this program a long time. What are your words on that same topic?**

MIKE SEARS: I agree with both of these guys. You spend so much time with the guys, more than our own families and they become our family. Been here for four years and seeing the program change since we got there. And we always talk about making the program better than when we got there. And I think that this group has raised that bar to a place that not even we thought we could do.

And after the game, I bust out into tears because you just get so close to all your best friends and it comes to an end, and there's nothing we could do about it.

Obviously we wanted to win today and go tomorrow and the taste of the super regional we got last year. We were hungrier this year than we had ever been. To fall short of that was a little disappointing.

But these guys are all my best friends, so we'll enjoy the rest of the time we have together on the bus and back in hometown. Just grateful that I got to come here and grateful for all the relationships I've had.

**Q. You really made the starting pitcher work hard tonight. They threw a lot of pitches. What was he doing, though, to get himself out of a few of the jams that you guys presented?**

MIKE SEARS: I thought he was in away kind of effectively wild with some of the pitches he was throwing. At least to me he wasn't throwing all outside. They were doing a good job of -- I don't know if they were trying to -- but going in, going out. And he did a great job. He did. He really did.

He didn't walk a lot of guys, which is always -- when you make teams -- get guys on, get them over, get them in, it's a lot harder to score. When you're not getting walks and the guy's making really good pitches -- and pitcher's counts, it's tough to hit.

GRANT MAGILL: Yeah, he was just moving that sinker in and out. He peppers your hands one at-bat, and you can throw that on the outside and it looks like it's further away because you're all sped up. He was doing a good job mixing that in and out, like Mike said.

**Q. You mentioned it. The crowd got into this game early, and you guys kind of demonstrated -- you're playing at home last year when you were playing a**

**regional -- Those types of plays, for example, the play Grant made at shortstop, not easy to make, but you're more confident to make them on the field when things are rolling. How difficult is it to fight that when you're in the dugout or as a player?**

MITCH HANNAHS: Well, first of all, I think, obviously, working hard and earning the right to host is a big deal in college baseball, just because of that. Just because you're playing in front of your crowd. You obviously can control the noise somehow because it's all for you.

But when you can't get on top of it as the opponent, it's really frustrating because it's like a ball that keeps rolling at you and it never stops. I mean, you're hoping to break through and get a big knock at a crucial time just to quiet it down for a moment.

But obviously when you get shut out, you're chasing three right off the bat, you can't really get a lot going. And you have those two innings we had. And I talked about it today, in postseason play, your opportunities are, they're limited. When you get them you've got to take advantage of them.

I knew when I let those slide by that it was going to be really tough to silence the crowd and hold Kentucky at bay.

**Q. Pitching-wise, Cole struggled a little bit. I've seen worse in these types of games. How did you feel just generally about the three guys that threw?**

MITCH HANNAHS: I thought in Cole's case, I think we were hoping to shorten the game a little bit. Hoping to get him one time through the order and hopefully get him through there with minimal damage. But I think we got through eight hitters with him and we just had to make the move.

And I thought Pruitt was sped up a little bit early, but he settled in. And I think that was -- we got past that fifth inning and I think the thought in the dugout was, hey, we weathered the storm. We're down three, Pruitt is settling in. We're in decent shape. I wouldn't call it great shape, down 3-0, but we felt like we were in pretty good shape.

And in terms of Simon, he's Simon. He's going to spin it and turn it over. And after Pruitt, he was very effective because Pruitt speeds you up with that quick arm, and then Simon slows it down. I like what we had in terms of a plan to get through today. We just didn't do enough offensively.

**Q. You mentioned the 3-0 lead. Felt like you were on the verge of getting back in that in any moment. When it goes to 5-0 on the opposite field home run, can you**

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**talk about what a difference those two situations feel like?**

MITCH HANNAHS: Yeah, I think we have to do our interviews. It was the fifth inning, we were talking on air there. Three felt like about six. It almost felt like we were down 6-0. So then when you're down three and it feels like five or six, and we got a 2-2 pitch to Petri that we wanted in that we ran back on the plate, they go up 5-0, and you're sitting there thinking, man, we've got a lot of opportunities pass us. And trying to put enough together in the seventh, eighth and ninth was going to be really tough.

**Q. It's earlier than you wanted to put a bow on the season, which I know is disappointing for everybody. I know you put it in perspective a little bit, but how do you kind of put it into perspective of it was a 44-win season, you're nationally ranked, your RCPI was in the top 10. Those things don't happen every year. But they've been more regularly lately. But even though it's painful, is it easy to think back on the pride of those accomplishments?**

MITCH HANNAHS: It is. When you set in that game and you get to the ninth and you have a chance to kind of reflect because you're thinking, man, this is going to be tough sledding to score five or six in the ninth, you can't help but point your mind to "I thought this group did enough to host a Regional." I thought they did more than enough to host a Regional.

And you're sitting there and you're a little frustrated, but not only do you not host, you come to the No. 2 seed, which we knew was going to be extremely tough when we saw the draw.

So I think getting past that frustration to this point now, I think that frustration will lay there a little while because it is what it is. But I think you still look to the way these guys have competed and what they've done.

We lost a lot of Friday night games through the season when Pruitt -- obviously Pruitt went down at Southern Miss and missed about seven weekends, six or seven weekends of starts. And so we kind of hodge-podged Friday night without moving our Saturday/Sunday guys.

For them to battle through that and win all those series, when they were, probably three or four of them were dropped to Friday night, just says a lot to the resiliency of this group. I think as you look back, look at what these guys have done and what they've been -- they've been one of the most resilient groups I've been around. Nothing seems to faze them.

So I think that's been the special part of this last couple of seasons.

**Q. What do you feel like Mason did from your perspective -- we heard from the players -- but what do you feel Mason did today that made them successful against your hitters?**

MITCH HANNAHS: Sure, I think obviously you guys watch a lot of SEC baseball. I don't get to see as much SEC baseball, but I think there's a way you have to pitch in the SEC to survive.

And you see that in a 3-1 breaking ball. You see that in a 2-0 breaking ball. I think what he did extremely well is he didn't center cut a fastball when he was behind in the count. He was still pitching, and I think that was the big thing.

I think the hitters that they face on a daily basis in the SEC requires them to be able to pitch behind in the count. And I thought that's what he did really well. And I think the other thing, we talked about our resiliency. I thought his resiliency and his poise was excellent on the mound.

Last thing I would say is obviously some of you folks in here are Kentucky folks, good luck the rest of the way.

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