

College World Series: Lexington Super Regional

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Oregon State Beavers

Mitch Canham

Elijah Hainline

Aiden May

Postgame Press Conference

Kentucky 10, Oregon State 0

MITCH CANHAM: Not the best game, obviously. Had it close early on. A couple opportunities for us to drive some runs across, but their pitcher did a great job mixing three pitches in any count, as we newest been doing all year.

Tried to make a few adjustments, drive the baseball, but kept us off balance a bit. We had a couple moments, just wasn't able to capitalize on them, and then stuff started to fall apart at the end.

We talked about it a lot, playing clean baseball, eliminating free bases, and we put ourselves in a good spot with our offense, but we did not do that the second half of the game, thus leading to what it was.

As we just talked about as a group, it's a great opportunity for us to wake up after being punched and respond tomorrow.

Q. What was Mitch's message after the game?

AIDEN MAY: Just respond. That was not acceptable, the way that we played. We've just got to jump back in. There's no other -- what other choice do we have is respond. I believe in this ballclub, and I think we're going to surprise a lot of people tomorrow.

We're going to come out hot and play the ballgame the way we need to. Just any kind of response.

ELIJAH HAINLINE: From the offensive perspective, just go out there and do what we've been doing the whole year. I think everyone knows that we can hit and we have a really good offense, so it's just putting at-bats together and picking up each other when you get in those situations.



I'd say just continue to do what we've done the whole year and just kind of trust that throughout the next couple days.

Q. Elijah, what was Pooser doing so well tonight?

ELIJAH HAINLINE: He was throwing three pitches. He threw them pretty well and he pitched himself a good game. Got a lot of weak contact. I think that was the biggest thing.

But we have a really good offense that I think can respond to that, and I think we have the ability to go out there and hit guys like that. I think the next couple days the big focus is just do what we have the whole year.

Q. Aiden, how would you describe your stuff tonight and what you had and just facing their lineup?

AIDEN MAY: I'm not very happy with my performance. I think I made a lot of dumb mistake pitches and they capitalized. They're a good team and I shouldn't have made some of the pitches that I did. I wanted to stay in that ballgame, but it is what it is, and I think we're going to bounce back tomorrow.

I have a lot of faith in our pitching staff, and just one of those games, I guess.

Q. Was there one in particular you'd kind of like to have back that you feel like you put in the wrong spot?

AIDEN MAY: There was a couple. I feel like I doubled off a couple fastballs, and there was one slider that I would have liked to have back in the second inning, I believe. It was the double off the wall. I thought it was a good pitch, but just bad timing. I think he was sitting on it and made a good swing, and it is what it is.

Q. Elijah, it's the fewest hits you guys have had all year, just the second shutout. Is there a way to describe how you struggled today? Was it just kind of a snowball effect?

ELIJAH HAINLINE: Just one of kind of those nights.



That's the biggest thing. He pitched well. He did what he needed to do and he executed.

We didn't execute what we needed to do today on the approach and doing what we needed to do to be successful.

Going back tomorrow with a different approach and just resetting I think is the biggest focus.

Q. What gives you confidence that you're going to respond tomorrow? What about this team fuels that?

ELIJAH HAINLINE: We always have confidence. I think we all know we can go out there and win any game any time.

I think just always having confidence. I don't think it comes from one specific instance or anything like that or anything like that. I think it's just a big team performance.

I think Aiden has been throwing amazing the whole year, so we have his back any chance that we get and we know he's going to throw another time throughout this year.

AIDEN MAY: Yeah, we've been responding all year. We've gone through some rough patches and we found a way to respond. Like I said earlier, what choice do we have? We don't want this to be the last game of the season tomorrow.

So we're going to go out and we are going to punch back and do everything we can to win the ballgame. We're going to show up big time way, and I expect it from our guys.

Q. Aiden, it seems like their lefties in particular had success off you tonight. Do you think there was something in your stuff that led to the lefties having more success than the righties tonight?

AIDEN MAY: I think I just wasn't commanding it the way I needed to. Like I said they put some good swings on some mistake pitches, but I also think that I had some good success against some of the lefties in the lineup.

I think it was just one of those things that maybe if I command the ball a little bit better, maybe if I make the right pitches in the right spots, it's a different story. They've got a good team, and I think they capitalized on the mistakes that I made.

Q. You had some opportunities as you mentioned early on. I think in the fifth inning it was a one-run game, you get two runners on, they work out of a jam.

What did that do for the momentum of the game?

MITCH CANHAM: I always feel like our offense is in a good place when it comes to momentum. It can change real quick for us. One guy getting on, one guy just walking to the plate the right way sparks everybody else. Rather than looking into it too much and saying, okay, like we just got one hit on that, on the night, just push the panic button; I don't think that's the right approach.

Sometimes those are going to happen, and we've minimized those all year long. I guess heightened with it being supers and all.

I look at those guys and, again, how they communicate, how they work together. They hit more than anybody I've ever been around, in the morning, noon, and night. Every single one of them just continues to get better and better, from when they first stepped on to campus to who they are right now, not just on the hitting side, but look at leaf Palmer tonight and show up for an inning and two-thirds, for a guy who missed a lot of the season from an injury. So to see him jump out there on the stage, and the guys feed off that, too. Sometimes it's just finishing the game.

We had a series earlier this year, and we were not playing well at all, and then sparked something in that last inning and we carried it over into the next day. We can use stuff like Laif and him going out and performing, because he's already pretty dang tall, but he's going to walk a little taller tomorrow, and that feeds to the next guy and the next guy.

I looked at those guys in the huddle after the game and I saw what was in their eyes, and they want to fight. They want to get back out there and they want to play right now. But we do have over 24 hours to sit and wait, process it, flush it, and prepare for tomorrow's game.

But I wouldn't let -- I think it's just a bad decision to let one thing carry over into the next. So turn the page.

Q. What was the most frustrating part of that seventh inning?

MITCH CANHAM: The seventh inning? I can't say there's any one particular thing. There's just a lot of things that compiled right there that just did not look good.

We're checking runners at second base and they're clearly way out, outside of where they should be instead of stepping off and putting on a daylight or something like that, an inside move, just let them take off.

So we allowed them to run because we were sped up. We threw two baseballs away when -- we can play catch.



Then it's just the walks. Those are some things that you just -- no one has the ability to even control outside of the guy who's on the mound.

Too many free bases. When you give up walks, that's a big momentum shift because everyone is out there and you're going through your pre pitch over and over again and you want the baseball. We talk about that all the time, want the baseball. Who wants it right now.

You can see in the body language going from wanting it to I need you to throw a strike so I can get the baseball.

So obviously those are big shifting moments. But when the guys come back in, they flushed that really quick and they're like, let's go have quality at-bats right now because that's how good things happen.

It's not go up there and get a pitch. Have a quality at-bat, pitch the pitch. We'll regroup, process it all and wake up tomorrow in a much better head space than we are right now. I've seen these guys too much to think any different.

Q. What do you think Pooser did so well tonight against your hitters that made them unable to get that big swing in this one?

MITCH CANHAM: He throws quality strikes. He doesn't really dabble around. He still walked a handful of guys, which allowed us to get in those situations. But when runners are in scoring position or we had guys on base, they were able to minimize. We didn't get a bunt down at one point, then we end up walking the bases loaded with one out, unable to draw any across.

But we got under some balls, we clipped some, we struck out 11 times, 12 times, and that's just too easy of a way back to the dugout is striking out. Being a little more competitive. I don't think it was necessarily strike-out stuff that we were facing tonight. We should have put a lot more balls in play.

A handful of them were hit hard. Shoot, McDowell almost makes the catch on the top of the wall; Macias had one down the line; gets one more step on it and then there's a handful of different runs right there.

But really it's a tight ballgame. We were talking do we play infield in right now, do we leave the guys back. I don't mind being down four right now if that's what it comes to, give up one not two because of what we know our offense is capable of doing. And those guys on the back end of our bullpen that come in in those tight games, we know what they can give us, as well.

So until it was a 10-0 ballgame I thought we were still in it. We always feel that way. It's a habit. You look at the lineup, the lineup card posted in the dugout, and you just visualize success from each of those guys and how they're going to get on and do it.

It makes it easy. When you see their name and you know how hard these kids work, when you look at that lineup, you're like, man, we got this. You look at the guys down the bullpen, you're always filled with confidence.

That's just a choice that I personally make, to see the best in those guys, because they work their butts off.

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