

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Missouri Tigers

Kerrick Jackson

Jackson Lovich

Postgame Press Conference



like they are when they're good. So just making sure whenever it's going not so good, just lean on those guys a little bit more and just stay consistent.

Q. Jackson, how do you feel about a guy like Mateo who could play at the next level, but also being a catalyst captain for you guys with that home run in the top of the fourth? How do you feel that he's been a commander to the pitching staff, but also, to you guys, 1 through 9, offensively?

JACKSON LOVICH: Yeah, it's been awesome just watching him from his freshman year to sophomore year. It's been really cool to see. He brings that confidence even when it's not going his way, but the pitchers feel that, and just watching him grow over the past two years has been awesome.

Q. Jackson, with the runners left on base today, was there something from Bama's pitching staff you felt they did well to keep you guys from being able to cash in with all the base runners you had?

JACKSON LOVICH: I think they executed. They had a plan and they stuck to it, and we didn't. Simple as that.

Q. What's your biggest takeaway from the season?

JACKSON LOVICH: I have a bunch, but for me, just making sure to stay thankful throughout. To whoever it is, coaches, players, just coming in and having that appreciation, I think a team can feel that, and it helps.

Q. What did you think of Sam today? Where was he on the spectrum of what you were looking for from him?

KERRICK JACKSON: He went out and competed. Obviously, the command was a little loose at times and we fell behind in some counts. But the stuff was firm, and I thought that he showed, again, what he's capable of doing. But that's what you get when you get a guy that's a two-sport athlete. We're only getting him part of the time, and so understandably so, he's competing for that QB 1

Alabama 4, Missouri 1

KERRICK JACKSON: Obviously, not the way that we wanted our year to go in totality, but I think today's game just kind of showed who we were all year. As I told our guys, we were growing and developing as a club. We're an immature baseball club, and I don't mean that disrespectfully. It's just the reality of what it is, and that showed itself today where there were some opportunities that we had to put ourselves in a position to win a ballgame, and we just weren't able to come up with the right hit or make the right play at the right time. But that's just growth and development with these guys.

This guy sitting here next to me is our most experienced position player on the field, specifically with SEC experience. So when you have a young club like that, you're going to go through some ups and downs.

Q. Jackson, as Coach mentioned your experience, what did you see as your team was fighting it this season? What did you see as your role in keeping things together and keeping the train moving?

JACKSON LOVICH: Yeah, for me I think it was just being in that stay presence, just bringing positivity every day. I know how this league is, and I know that there's no off weekends. Every weekend, you've got to have your best stuff. I just tried to provide that example for the guys.

Q. What goes into maintaining motivation after a tough season like this? How do you keep fighting and battle the way you guys did today?

JACKSON LOVICH: Yeah, it starts with faith, and then just having a strong foundation. Everybody at Mizzou and my family has supported me, and I can't ask for much more. When the times are tough, they're going to be with you just

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job, and we recognize that.

So what you saw was what the potential could be with him. And whenever he settles in to figuring out exactly what lane he's going to go in, I think he's going to be phenomenal whatever he chooses.

Q. Those nine runners stranded over the final four innings there, what did you see as far as you guys not getting those hits in those moments and Alabama's pitching staff getting out of those innings?

KERRICK JACKSON: Immaturity, because when you look at some of those situations, we talked about what our approach needed to be with the starters specifically coming off of a short rest. The goal for us was, hey, can we get him up to 45, 50 pitches in the first three innings. Knowing what he was wanting to do was force them out over the plate and up and take advantage of those, and we got in those situations, and you could just see where guys were swinging at stuff that wasn't even in the zone.

So when you have that happen over and over and over again in those situations, it makes it tough. One of our hitters specifically we talked about, hey, you're going to go up in this situation. They know you're a first pitch swinger. They're going to throw you a first pitch breaking ball. Don't miss it. And we take it.

So it's just, again, development. It's just these guys playing more baseball and learning the game more. And as they do that, they're going to be really good players.

Q. How important was Jackson this season just as you guys were fighting it through the middle of the season to hold the team together as a player as best you could?

KERRICK JACKSON: Outstanding. I think the part that gets missed with Jackson is -- and you know because you've followed us. The first three weeks of the season, Jackson was hitting below .200, and our players missed that. They now see him hitting .340 and doing all the things he's doing now, but they forgot the part where he started off the season where he was hitting below .200 because was the draft was on his shoulders and it was pressing, and it was starting to spiral on him. And then he just kind of settled in and came back and stuck to his approach and knew who he was as a hitter, and really just matured himself as he went along through the season.

I wish more of our guys would have been paying attention to the journey that he took this year, specifically when you go back to last year. I think last year at this time, he finished the year hitting .200 in conference. So we miss --

kids are now in a space where it's the here and now and they don't pay attention to how things develop and grow, and that was a great opportunity for them to see it. Hopefully, they look back on the year and say, man, this guy was here and he ended up doing this.

So I think, like he said, he was a steady presence because he was just going out every day, and once he finally settled in, doing the right things on a daily basis.

Q. Where did you see the areas of growth maybe for the program throughout the season? How do you take what went on this year and turn it into something positive as you go forward?

KERRICK JACKSON: Well, I think when we pitched well and we were in games and we weren't chasing crooked numbers early, we were in a good spot. We played defense well at times, and I think, again, from an offensive perspective, the first half of the season, I think we were averaging like six runs a game. And then we got in a situation there where we just started chasing crooked numbers early.

And from a offensive perspective, guys put a lot of pressure on themselves to hit a five-run home run with nobody on base. That doesn't happen.

So just trying to get these guys to understand that, and as we slowly went along, we would have moments where you could see for me, as a coach and a teacher, I look for the aha moment, where we would talk to them about something, it would happen, and you'd see their eyes light up, and they'd come back, and they're like, oh, I see what you're talking about.

But then two games later, the anxiety of the situation got on them and they just fell back into, I've got to do this right now. That's where it was, was just that there was moments and times where things really clicked for them and they understood, and then there was still some moments where they fell back into not being able to understand.

Q. Looking at the season you guys had, how valuable was this experience here going in and being able to have a game where it's, oh, hey, the season is on the line now? What does that do for your guys going forward?

KERRICK JACKSON: What it should let them know is, and I talked to them post-game was, you're capable. And because you're capable, again, now you just have to play baseball the way that baseball is supposed to be played, and getting them to understand that.



I've been through a rebuild before, so I know what it looks like and I know it's not pretty. Some of these guys in our locker room, they've never experienced any type of adversity ever. And so this is the first time they've experienced it. And when you're on this stage and in this league and everything is so visible with social media and you've got all the negative experience and the doubt about what's going on, then that can weigh on these kids a little bit.

So just try to steer them to understand, you control your future, you control your destiny, but you have to go about your business in the right way. And so this game today was a microcosm of our season. This game was there for us if we wanted to have taken it, but we didn't want to take it, so ultimately, we ended up with a loss.

Q. As you look forward, what do you think needs to happen for Missouri to take the next step in baseball? Is it a support thing? I know that was a big part of the conversation this year. Where do you want to see the next steps taken for you guys?

KERRICK JACKSON: Ultimately, it's on me. The one thing that as I look back on the year and reflect, the team should reflect who I am as an individual and how I go about my business, and there wasn't enough of that. Like I said, with the path that I've taken professionally, with some of the things that I've done and experienced, I have an attitude of nothing matters but the opportunity that's in front of you. So that's the biggest thing that we're going to take moving forward is, hey fellas, we have to go about our business in a certain way, and if you don't go about it in a certain way, it puts you in a position where you can't be successful at this level.

There's a level for you, but it just won't be at this level, but more importantly, it won't be in our program. And So I just have to take the reins back and I have to make sure all of guys have that mindset, and that we come out come out next year swinging.

What I like about adversity is, it becomes great if you learn from it and move forward from it because as we're the biggest story for how bad we are this year, I promise you, we'll be the biggest story for how good we're going to be next year.

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