

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Mississippi State Bulldogs

Justin Parker

Noah Sullivan

Postgame Press Conference



NOAH SULLIVAN: I was pretty excited for it. We've seen he's been hit around pretty good, but they got a lead, and he just didn't miss spots once they were up 6-0, 8-0.

Q. Noah, in those second and third innings when defense wasn't as great and you guys started to fall behind, how hard was it to recover and what were some of the messages you were talking about?

NOAH SULLIVAN: We just had to keep playing. We had to find a way to scratch a couple because it was only the second or third inning, so we were fine. We were just unable to because Prager was so good.

Q. Noah, how does it feel to have a guy like Powell that just works in the pitching staff. I know today, you guys shelled off a little bit, and McPherson didn't do well. How do you feel about what you guys can accomplish next week if you guys get into the regionals?

NOAH SULLIVAN: Yeah, it's exciting. We have one of the best offenses in the country. We have a bunch of really good players in the clubhouse and a lot of leaders. We have a lot of our best ball ahead. Just get back home and back to work.

Q. Noah, obviously, you guys have had a big offensive firepower the last month. Kind of came up a little short today. What were they doing well defensively to kind of shut you guys down today?

NOAH SULLIVAN: Yeah, they had a really good game plan. Prager was really good. He had all three pitches working, and he'd sneak in a heater there whenever we were on the slider or the change-up. So he just had a really good game plan and executed.

Q. This game, notwithstanding y'all have been red hot at the plate, especially Ace, and you and Ace each had two hits today. What's it like hitting behind him right now? He's been pretty consistent all year, but at this moment when he has five straight games of two or more hits, right at the top of the league in most

Texas A&M 9, Mississippi State 0

JUSTIN PARKER: Yeah, just disappointed. It feels like we played playoff baseball here now for about a month, and to come out early and not make enough pitches and plays in the second and third inning, put ourselves at that deficit, felt like it almost took that two innings to get their guys settled in, and I don't know if he missed a spot after the second inning. So almost kind of momentum ceased to exist there, and they had all of it, and it just made it hard for us to script back in.

Q. Noah, you've played a lot of baseball, and you know you can have days like this. What's the mood like around the team, and how do you flush this and get ready for postseason ball?

NOAH SULLIVAN: We still have our best ball ahead of us, luckily. It's frustrating because we played really good the past three weeks to a month. But we get back to it, back to practice once we get back.

Q. Noah, along those lines, too, you know you've got some more baseball to play in front of you, so I'm sure it makes it a little bit easier to flush it, but how eager are you guys to get back to Starkville and figure out where you're going and start game planning for a regional?

NOAH SULLIVAN: Yeah, it sucks we ended this so shortly because everybody says it's so much fun. Didn't get to experience that. But we just came out super flat and didn't play well enough.

Q. Noah, when you heard or you learned that Prager was starting for A&M, was that what you expected? Did it change how you approached the game going in?



categories, what's it like hitting behind him?

NOAH SULLIVAN: Yeah, it makes it really easy for me. They don't want to pitch to him, so they'd rather throw to me, and Hunter hides behind me as well. So it's pretty fun to be sandwiched in between those guys.

Q. With a couple days off now, what's it important to spend those days doing resetting before you find out what's next on Monday?

NOAH SULLIVAN: Yeah, getting everybody with nicks and bruises back on their feet, get in the weight room and then get back to it. We've got a lot of baseball left to play.

Q. Coach, you've been playing pretty sound defense and pitching well for the most part. What was wrong in that second inning from what you were able to see? What do you think went wrong there?

JUSTIN PARKER: Yeah, I think just Reed got lost on the warning track, lost his footing. Lead-off outs are so important. The inning could go a completely different way. We didn't make enough pitches there in the middle of it. I think Gallo has made that play to his left dozens of times this year.

I don't know that it's anything fundamentally. His feet got tangled, and they get runners, and we didn't handle it.

Q. Along those lines, too, it should have been two outs, instead you get two men on base, nobody out, you went out there and tried to settle the defense and McPherson. What was your message? That's a freshman in a big spot against a really good offense.

JUSTIN PARKER: Just that he doesn't need to be a hero here. We don't need to try to scrape out of this thing completely. Give up one or two, but let's keep us in the game. Sometimes I think guys end up trying to strand everybody, and you end up making big mistakes. And then, of course, you roll around to one of the best power hitters in the league with the bases loaded, and that was a pretty defining moment of the game.

So just to calm him down, just try to get him to continue to make pitches. I thought he pitched pretty good. But again, just momentum and fragility of this came, you have to play complementary baseball, and he's got to do better. He's got to make more pitches, and we've got to help support him.

Q. How concerning is this performance as the last one before you go into the NCAA Tournament?

JUSTIN PARKER: Well, I mean, I'm not concerned. It's the game of baseball. We've played great for a month. We've been unbelievable early in games offensively. We've scored in the first inning for what seems like two to three weeks straight. I really did think once they got the six-run lead, I thought Prager did a really nice job of settling in, and I'm not sure he missed a spot after the second, and he mixed pitches. He made it really tough. The guy is a veteran pitcher in our league. He might have been the best pitcher in our league last year. You've got to tip your cap to that type of performance.

But not concerned. Like Noah said, we'll get back home, we'll recommit to the weight room, take these next couple days off and try to catch our breath, and then just continue to prepare and move forward.

Q. Continuing on that thought, it's been hard for any team in the SEC this year from the top down to sustain success for a very long time without the pendulum going back the other way. When you get back to Starkville, what's your message and what's your strategy to push the pendulum back to the other side?

JUSTIN PARKER: Well, we've just got to get back to work. Really, we've got to prepare and get back to work, and probably the front end of this week looks like taking a day or two off, just let everyone catch their breath, rest up, heal any injuries. We're starting to get some guys back healthy on the mount. I thought Dane Burns and Charlie Foster were really bright spots today.

Catch our breath early in the week and then get back to work this weekend.

Q. Coach, I do want to ask you, when you found out that Prager was going to be the starter for Texas A&M, was there any discussion about changing McPherson and maybe going with somebody else, and what went into the decision making to make McPherson the starter for today?

JUSTIN PARKER: Well, I felt like he was our best available guy. So no, there was no conversation. We were sticking with him regardless of the matchup.

Q. When you went into crafting the pitching lineup for this week, what factored into your decision to start a freshman on the first day, and also, what would the rest of the week have looked like?

JUSTIN PARKER: Well, it's irrelevant now, but Pico Kohn had started on short rest the last three weeks, so two weeks ago against Kentucky on a Saturday. He went Friday the week before and then last week, went on

Thursday. So he was on short rest all three weeks. We felt like he was a non-option to move up another day. All three of the guys threw bullpens, light bullpens yesterday, anticipating us playing the game last night. They would have all been available tomorrow.

The thought and the hope was that Ryan came out and kind of did what he did in the first and move the ball around and kept them off balance. I love the kid. I think he's got big time stuff. I don't think he was the beneficiary of a ton of luck today, albeit some of it was his own doing. But he was our guy there, and I'd start him again.

Q. You mentioned getting Foster back and a couple other guys back. Heading to the regional, what's the prognosis for Hungate, and do you expect to be full strength everywhere else?

JUSTIN PARKER: Hungate, I'm not sure yet. He's progressing. We've got to see how far he can get. Every day it's a little bit better. The rest of them, for the most part that you've seen I think, are continuing to get better and more experienced, trying to get pitch counts up and things of that nature, trying to get volume up.

I thought that the three weekend starters had as collective of a good pen week as we've had all year this week, so we're hoping all those guys are rested up and ready to go, too.

Q. On that same vein there with your guys you've added, Charlie Foster, you basically added a free agent there late in the year with what he's got. What have you seen from him the last two appearances, and what does a guy like that add to your staff now moving forward?

JUSTIN PARKER: Well, you have another left-hander with a ride fastball, which is huge, especially facing a lineup like we faced today. I thought he was much more comfortable today than he was probably last Saturday. That's just going to come with time, getting him out there, getting him experienced.

I think you add a left-handed ride fastball; I think you have a guy that could potentially start a Game 4 in a regional. I think you have a guy that can come out of your pen and fill a spot and be a matchup guy.

And I thought Dane Burns was equally as good, kind of different stuff, lower sinker/slider type guy, but you have two lefties that are going to present left-on-left matchups if nothing else.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

