

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Friday, May 23, 2025

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Arkansas Razorbacks

Dave Van Horn

Zach Root

Cam Cozeal

Postgame Press Conference



think he is who he was and he was throwing inside to some of our guys, fastball, cutter. Just got to be more on the attack and more aggressive.

Q. Zach, what's it like to have a guy like Helfrick behind the dish and also your mentality after the first inning after getting roughed up a little bit?

ZACH ROOT: Yeah, rider is the best catcher I've thrown to my entire life. He calls a great game and he gets a lot of pitches that are borderline. I went out the second inning just stuff didn't go my way so I went out thinking it was still a 0-0 ballgame.

Q. Cam, did you see anything when you hit that ball to the right center gap, the outfield collision there?

CAM COZEAL: Yeah, I was rounding first and I saw them both dive. I saw them both on the ground and was thinking three out of the box because it's a big ballpark, and Coach Wernes was there, says you've got to go, so I thought there might be a play at the plate. I don't know really what happened behind me. But yeah, that's what I saw.

Q. Cam, do you like the idea of trying to be positive, of getting some extra rest before the regional, or would you like to get some more live reps here?

CAM COZEAL: Competing is always the best thing you can do to prepare for championship baseball. Baseball didn't go our way today, and that's just the game. But we can see it as a positive and use it as a restful time, come closer together as a team, spend some time that way, practicing, just spending time together. We're excited to go and compete in the regional.

Q. Dave, I'll ask you the same question in kind of a different way. There's always a question of rest versus rust. Would you rather keep playing, beyond the fact you want to win the tournament, to get ready for next week, or can that rest help?

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, the way the tournament is set up now, to answer your question, I would much rather be

Arkansas 5, Ole Miss 2

DAVE VAN HORN: You're just looking at the box score and pretty much knew. I knew know the exact total. Both pitching staffs really did a nice job. I think both teams had double digit strikeouts and both bullpens did a tremendous job.

You're coming in and pretty much shutting down the offense, and trying to be positive with everything that we do. Obviously you learn from everything that happens and you talk about it a little bit, but the positive today for us is that we pitched well. We pitched good enough to win.

I thought Zach got a couple back bad breaks in the first inning. Spotted him five; felt like they'd of scored maybe one. We don't -- we fielded the ball all year and we've turned double plays, and we didn't do it today, and it cost us.

I didn't think their five runs would hold up. I thought we'd score five but we didn't, so hats off to them for that.

But the positive for me today was Gaeckle and Gibler and then Foutch coming in and getting a one-hitter. But Zach threw pretty good. He gave up some hits, but five runs, one run was earned. He should have been off the field pretty quick a couple innings in, and who knows how the game would have turned out.

But I don't know. That's about all I've got.

Q. Cam, what were you seeing out of Riley today that maybe you didn't see a couple months ago in oxford?

CAM COZEAL: I mean, I can't speak to it a whole bunch. I



playing at least one more game and hopefully two just to kind of stay on rhythm a little bit.

If we'd have been here since Tuesday and maybe won three in a row and we had to win two or three more to win it, I don't know, maybe that's more than you need. I might answer you differently.

But it's our first game. We weren't ready to go home.

Q. What is the message to the team after you go one and done in Hoover and the ultimate goal is to get to Omaha? What is the message to the team the rest of the way?

DAVE VAN HORN: The message in the outfield is you learn from today's game. We let it slip a little bit in the first and the pitchers did a great job of holding them down, giving us an opportunity. But Ole Miss's pitchers would have none of it. You know how a bad inning can finish you. All the games coming up are to the point now where you lose a couple, you're done.

But the message going forward is that we've got to tighten up as a group. We can't let that happen again, and we need to have a good week back in Fayetteville and get ready to go.

Q. You have some success getting base runners against Maddox first couple of innings, and for about three or four innings not a whole lot. What did you see in those at-bats that probably changed?

DAVE VAN HORN: Probably more to do with where he was locating his fastball. He's got a lot of run on his fastball, arm-side run. We had one hitter, had a 2-0 count got jammed and that's not a good thing, really jammed. Great pitch and not a good decision at the plate.

But this is what he had, and then he threw that little spinner away and he located. He did a great job. He really pitched today. Best I've seen him when we've played him.

Q. You guys are No. 1 in the country with strike-out-to-walk ratio. How do you feel about your pitching coming into the regional next week and what lies ahead?

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, I feel great about it. Today didn't go well, obviously, but I feel good about our team. I feel good about our pitching. Like you said, defense has been solid. We've swung the bat pretty well statistically if you look at it.

Again, we've been playing for this all year, to get where we

are now. It's like I tell them, you can learn from today, maybe learn from how you felt this week not playing. We're going to have that same type of week, we've got to be a little bit sharper come next Friday.

Q. Tell us a little bit about what you've liked from Gibler as the season has gone on? Early on there was a lot of midweek opportunities but he's obviously grown into something else. What are your expectations for him moving forward, as well?

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, he's just grown up. From when he walked in the door, he had a good arm, didn't command stuff great, then he'd have a good outing, then he'd have a bad outing, and this was in fall practice.

Kind of pitched with an attitude almost too much where I felt like if you pitch like that you're going to be a one-inning max guy. You can be better than that. He really calmed it down, and his stuff is obviously really hard to hit. Throws his fastball for a strike now when he needs to. He did it today.

Can get over a breaking ball, he can throw the swing-and-miss one and he can bury it. He is a big piece for our bullpen now.

Q. Dave, what did he show you today, Gaeckle?

DAVE VAN HORN: Yeah, I thought he threw the ball extremely well. We could have left him out there. We just want to get Gibby in there for a little bit. He had maybe a couple, three too many 3-2 counts, but there was breaking ball, slider, fastball for a strike, he was around the zone, only a couple of bad misses.

Just sits in the mid 90s, he can pitch, and we can use him in so many different roles, whether we finish a game with him, start him, long relief. He's such a good teammate, he doesn't care what he does.

Q. Obviously you wanted to be playing the next couple days. How do you approach this weekend? Is it rest time? Do you go back and get practice in?

DAVE VAN HORN: Well, tomorrow will be a day that we'll have the field and the weight room open for them, and we'll be up there hanging around if they want to come around we'll do some things.

But I don't think we're going to give them two days off in a row. We just need to see them and keep them rolling. But we'll rest them, but we would also try to improve on some things we didn't do well today, some things we need to do going forward if we're going to play for a while.



