

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Vanderbilt Commodores

Tim Corbin

RJ Austin

Jonathan Vastine

Finals Postgame Press Conference



Q. RJ, you and Jonathan both have won this twice in your careers. What makes it a special place and special tournament for your program?

RJ AUSTIN: Special because we get to come in here and show our talents. Get the best of the SEC. SEC is one of the best conferences in the country. It's going to be great games.

And you've got to learn how to play tournaments in order to get ready for the Regional and Super Regional and Omaha stuff like that, I think this tournament was a great start for us and just a great opportunity for us, and just glad that we got to come out here with a big win.

Q. On that note, what does this tournament do to help you prepare for the tournament next week, and how does it kind of get you in the right mindset for that?

JONATHAN VASTINE: I think it all starts with winning it. I think giving that confidence to this team. We've known for a while we had the fibers to do it, and to actually accomplish it here today just shows what this team is capable of. I think now that we've seen it, we got a trophy to our name, I think now we're aware that we could really do something special.

Q. What does it mean to see Jacob and Brodie step up in a big way, putting two out?

JONATHAN VASTINE: They've been doing that all year. Brodie Johnston is a special kid. He's a freak and a talent as a freshman. And Hump has been steady all year in our lineup. He got banged up, never changed who he was. He came back, got back in the lineup, did his thing.

That meant everything to us. The days we're not exactly putting up 10, 12 runs, we're still able to accomplish something cool with those guys. Couldn't be more happy.

Q. RJ, you won SEC Tournament MVP as a freshman. So now as a junior, seeing Brodie Johnston and Austin Nye put up the performances they did and Rustan Rigdon too, as freshmen, how did that make you feel

Vanderbilt - 3, Ole Miss - 2

TIM CORBIN: Well, I think first off just congratulations to Ole Miss on the season they've had, very good team. When we were there in Oxford, I left that series thinking that pitching is very, very potent and good. So they certainly can go a long way in this deal, for sure.

They're very offensive as well, which kind of makes our situation very positive because the young man on the mound who pitched for us had a tough outing last week. I felt like, I don't think I'm alone at all, that he would bounce back in what is kind of a tough situation. Two freshmen out there today that were throwing very well but Austin Nye was very good for us. He had a good face.

He was delivering with the pitches. We played good defense behind him. Two double plays that were game-changing. So just a little bit different game than what we had played, but we needed it because that was a high-temperature game.

Sawyer got the last out, which is all that matters. And he did a nice job. But between him and Luke and Huesman coming in getting a double play, it's the fourth time he's done that this year, where he's come into a game and got a double play and got us out of it. He's been very opportunistic.

I'm happy for the kids. That's why you do this. To see them reach an accomplishment. More to come, but just reaching an accomplishment that is very special because this is a very demanding league and very tough and this league does such a special thing in celebrating these kids, and we so much appreciate being a part of it.



and what do you think that means for the future of the program?

RJ AUSTIN: Makes me super proud. I've seen these guys when they first came in. They were two freshmen. They didn't really talk too much but as we got to know them, they're great kids. They worked pretty hard. They're great guys off the field. So just seeing them accomplish everything they wanted is just great.

Austin Nye is very mature in what he does. Brodie when he's up to the plate, you couldn't tell he's a freshman. Having those two in our program for the next three to four years is a great accomplishment and a great blessing. So the program is going to be in great hands.

Q. A little bit about Austin, with his tough start and battling back to do what he did today. You said you and others weren't surprised. So tell me, what about him made it so you weren't surprised from what you saw from him today?

TIM CORBIN: The recruitment of him. Being a 14-year-old kid, pitching for Team USA in the championship game. You start looking for kids that have had those experiences where they've got built-in competitiveness, and you can see it. You can see it in his face.

When he came off the mound last week, I went right over to him right away because I know he was going to have a moment here for us.

I just feel very confident. I think RJ used the word upstairs, he's professional. He's a professional kid. He's mature beyond his years. He's 18 years in age but that's not how he acts. It's the same every day. He has good consistency in what he does. He's an honor roll student. You trust him. I think when it comes right down to it, that's our team. They trust one another to get things done and Austin was certainly that kid today.

Q. What's it about Brodie Johnston that's allowed him to be so successful this season and contribute the way that he has?

TIM CORBIN: Well, he's talented. You can see the tools and whether it's arm, bat speed, strength and he is continuing to play and he will continue to learn. But I think what makes him a little different is the fact that he can control his heart rate and adrenaline inside of competition. He does a good job of that.

He's got a fast memory. So if an at-bat doesn't go his way, he gets right back into the game. So I just think it's that.

He's a mature kid on the baseball field that is still learning how to play.

Q. What does it mean to have guys that step up in the bullpen today and how you utilized after Miller couldn't get the job done, Luke stepped up big, Levi stepped up big and Sawyer stepped up big, what is it like to have depth in the bullpen and going into the tournament next week?

TIM CORBIN: Yeah, and there's a bunch of names you didn't mention that weren't in there today that have done the same thing. So it's a team effort on the mound. It really was.

When Brownny and I spoke before Christmas break and we both agreed on one thing, that our pitching staff was going to be a good staff but it would be built upon a lot of different people. I think from that time, Brownny has done an outstanding job with these kids. They've been so consistent on the mound. And Tyler Herb has helped him too. I don't want to leave him out, because he's been great for Brownny. They've worked in concert with one another to do a good job for these kids.

They've just been consistent. They've put us in a good spot. And because of that, they held the floor for a decent amount of time and it allowed us to kind of catch up offensively, because midseason I knew we were going to come. Offensively I knew it at some point in time. But the pitching staff did a good job of just staying pretty consistent throughout the year.

Q. On the subject of Brodie, he only struck out once this whole tournament and was getting into some more favorable counts compared to some other times this season. Was there any adjustment that he made to kind of improve his approach there?

TIM CORBIN: I think people are careful in how they pitch him. I mean, they know if the ball's around the upper part of the strike zone or lower part of the strike zone, he does a good job of putting a good swing on it.

But he's getting better. He's getting better with the zone knowledge. I think if you asked him, that's what he wants to cut down on. But at the same time, there's a give and take with a kid like him because there's power in his bat. Sometimes the power swings, guys strike out a little bit.

But you always know that he's going to return back to a moment. He's that kid. And as I said, he's just a mature kid on the field.

Q. Can you recall a tournament whether it's this or a



Regional, what have you, where you had a team defense not commit a single error the entire time you've been there?

TIM CORBIN: I don't know what the stat line was in '19, we played more games, but this team can defend now with the best of them. I mean, they're one of the best defensive teams we've ever had at Vanderbilt.

You look up the middle, the strength of your team typically is up the middle. This guy is the best shortstop. That guy's the best center fielder. The catcher does a hell of a job. Second baseman. We've been back and forth with second basemen, but Rigdon has done a nice job controlling second base. He turned two outstanding double plays. But I think the hallmark of any team, particularly today you get in championship game, you've got to pitch and you've gotta play defense, and you can't give anything away.

What we didn't do this entire tournament was give anything away. We have always told the boys, solo home runs aren't going to beat you.

Even at the end, when Humphrey got off that swing, I just felt like, okay, we're fine, we're going to get through this. So it's been that. It's been pitching and defense all year.

Q. Now that you've been through it, what's your opinion of this new tournament format?

TIM CORBIN: For me, it was kind of wait and see. I've never done it before. The kids hadn't done it before. I just wanted to see how it played out. The one thing is my concern and my concern at the meeting when we were talking about it was the crowds. The crowds were outstanding.

I think for a team that finishes in the top four, you're really doing yourself a favor because it sets up like a normal weekend moving forward and moving back. So that part for us was great. We got to play Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

It sure as hell beats practicing and training back home. You know, 13,000 people, 14,000 people, you folks, the TV cameras, the temperature of the weather, the temperature of the games, that helps you moving forward.

So these guys have been a mature team. They will handle this in the way they need to handle it. They want to have fun in doing all of this, but we've got a lot of baseball ahead of us, and we can't wait to play. But this tournament has been outstanding. Obviously we won so it's easy for me to say that right now, but I just feel like the games were -- it's great to be here.

There's not one day -- they know how I feel about this tournament. I have a tremendous amount of gratitude for it, to think that we're in this conference and playing baseball at this level with people that care, people that care about watching you. There's not a conference tournament in the country that comes close to this. So we're fortunate. We're fortunate people.

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