

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Tennessee Volunteers Coach Josh Elander Cam Appenzeller Garrett Wright

Postgame Press Conference



Tennessee - 11, South Carolina - 6

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Tennessee.

JOSH ELANDER: Pretty good night by these two here. Hoover always continues to be a great event, and really good job by our guys to get out of the gates and swing the bat a little bit. And Appy threw the ball well. So good to be able to check that first box tonight and excited for the game tomorrow.

**Q. How were you feeling coming into that game, coming into that first inning?**

CAM APPENZELLER: I was feeling pretty good. I mean I was a little bit slow today, but I was excited to get out there and pitch.

**Q. What has this back half of the SEC play been like for you, not seeing the results maybe you wanted. Has it been difficult keeping your confidence up?**

CAM APPENZELLER: Yeah, it's been a bit of a grind, but we still have more season left. So it's the most important part of the season. So just being my best for that is the goal.

**Q. Garrett, you all had 15 hits today. Eleven of those 15 were singles. What made it so easy for you to hit all these singles today?**

GARRETT WRIGHT: Just sticking to our approach and not trying to do too much. I felt everybody that stepped into the box, felt they were going to do get their job done.

I'm going to give props here to Nate Eisfelder as well for

ripping a ball in the gap coming off his first SEC start. He's a gamer and he does a good job.

**Q. Cam, what was different for you in the first half of SEC play and the second half, you feel like? And what do you feel was working so well for you tonight?**

CAM APPENZELLER: Just during the first half of the game was kind of coming to me. I was throwing well, but there was a lot of good things that happened during the game that helped me out.

I mean, just the past four or five outings, it's been a bit of a grind. I haven't had my best stuff, but I'm working my way to get back there.

**Q. Cam, what's it like pitching alongside this offense that has your back? Give up the lead there in the third and they come back with six. They've been hot the last month or so.**

CAM APPENZELLER: Obviously I don't want any runs, but knowing they're behind me, and whenever I get in the dugout they're going to put up a couple of runs and keep fighting for me. That helps knowing that.

**Q. Cam, you said that sometimes over these last few outings you didn't feel you had your best stuff. How close to your best stuff did you feel like you had tonight?**

CAM APPENZELLER: I don't think it was very close to my best stuff. I was kind of moving a little slow today, but I was around the strike zone for the most part.

**Q. Garrett, just having that six-run bottom in the third inning, what was the mindset for you guys offensively and just keep pounding on the working counts effectively coming into tomorrow?**

GARRETT WRIGHT: Yeah, we just got to stack good at-bats. I thought we did a pretty well tonight. I mean that's what we gotta do. And there's just been times for sure where we haven't done that, and stacking good



at-bats tonight really, really helped out.

**Q. Garrett, you talked about Nate already. But how impressive was it for him to step up and that moment today and fill in for Reese?**

GARRETT WRIGHT: Yeah, that was really impressive. I mean, that's a big spot to come in, the SEC Tournament.

I mean it's very unfortunate event. Bad things happen to good people every once in a while. And him just stepping up and filling in for that, it was a good job.

**Q. Cam, you mentioned that you were slow a couple times. Are you talking about velo, delivery? What do you mean by that?**

CAM APPENZELLER: Just kind of felt like I felt it. My body felt like it was moving slower today, like it wasn't coming out as good as it could.

**Q. Garrett, I don't know how much you've caught Will Haas this season or in the offseason, but what makes him effective -- I guess not the offseason, he was hurt -- but when you have caught him what makes him effective?**

GARRETT WRIGHT: It's probably his caffeine intake. But his stuff's pretty good and I mean he's got a little weird arm slot, and he's a competitor. What he's got is he's going to compete. And you know he's going to go out there and give you his best.

**Q. To start with Reese, how did that happen yesterday, and do you have any updates on his status?**

JOSH ELANDER: Yeah, we were just running out to practice here at the Met getting the guys ready. Outfield is running around, and it was just kind of a freak accident -- a ball got hit and it clipped him in the right spot.

And we were with him last night over at UAB and I think the staff here did a phenomenal job making sure he was in the best of hands. Woody did a great job.

He's back in Knoxville tonight, and he's going to get that thing worked on, as far as the actual timeline of what we're looking at, I'm just glad Reese is in good spirits and we'll see how it plays out over the next few days.

It was a pretty scary moment. But thank goodness he seems to be in a better spot than what we thought from the beginning.

**Q. With him being back here in Knoxville, does that mean he's out for the rest of the SEC Tournament?**

JOSH ELANDER: That's a great question. I don't have the answer to that at this time. So as soon as we get some more information from the doctors and the people that are with him we'll let you guys know.

**Q. With Cam, trusting a freshman to start in the first round of the SEC Tournament, how confident are you in him and what he brings to the mound?**

JOSH ELANDER: Incredibly confident. It's funny, you look on here, he's a very humble, hardworking kid. He's talking about not having his best stuff. But the guy's 5-1. Maybe his ERA isn't as pretty as it was a month or two ago.

But last two games at OU and here tonight he gave us a chance to win an SEC game. And to be able to do that as a true freshman and grind through and just take the ball -- again, he's been amazing for us all year long.

I know you're never going to have success be completely linear for sure. But that guy's a winner and I'm glad he's on our team every day. And I'm thankful anytime I can hand him the ball.

**Q. I know this one just wrapped up, but do you have a plan for starter pitching plans for tomorrow against Arkansas?**

JOSH ELANDER: Yeah, we're going to roll with Evan Blanco tomorrow at the gate, and then we'll go from there.

**Q. What does it mean to have Clark behind the dish and how effectively he's helped the pitching staff throughout the year, and he's just having a multi-hit game today offensively on the other side?**

JOSH ELANDER: You know he's a really versatile player. He can do a lot of things at a very high level. I mean, offensively, what he's been able to put together over the course of 30 SEC games but also be able to juggle playing first base, and he's played outfield for us before. And he's more than capable of being an everyday catcher in the SEC.

And I just thought with Reese, that was the best mix and mojo for tonight's game. But we're very fortunate back there with Trent and Garrett. And I mean we've got guys that can do it all over the place.

But credit to them because it's been a minute since we've been back there. But he's done a great job for us on both sides of the baseball.

**Q. With Blanco tomorrow, will he be on any sort of pitch count?**

JOSH ELANDER: I'll get to specifics with Wrenn (phonetic) but Blanco and I were talking about it off, again, how he threw at OU, he feels really, really good. The guy's an elite competitor, wants the baseball. And we'll get into the specifics, but there's not any kind of hard pitch count as of now that we've discussed.

**Q. You said yesterday you're trying to figure out some stuff with you're pitching down here. With that Haas has given you today and the last couple outings, do you feel like he's a guy that you've gained some trust in?**

JOSH ELANDER: One-hundred percent. I think just the mentality that he brings, he's a really tough kid and he loves to get out there and compete. And the stuff is getting better and better.

In high school he was 93, 96 and won a lot of big games. I'm pretty sure he was a state champion his last year. He was a big part of that. So he likes the big moment. But the stuff is starting to catch back up and carry and be a little bit more consistent throughout his outings.

I believe he hit 96 tonight for the first time since post surgery. The guy who's going to compete objectively. It's really good stuff. It's a unique slot that's hard to prepare for. He has three pitches, so pretty fortunate to have Appy and Haas. Those two young freshmen lefties are going to be good here for us a while.

**Q. Have you all gotten any further answers on Landon and his availability this week?**

JOSH ELANDER: No further updates at this time. That's still a day-to-day deal. I haven't talked to Landon today. But when we have any kind of update we'll be sure to share.

**Q. With Eisfelder, what did you think about the way he filled in, especially bouncing back from the strikeout in his first at-bat, falls down 0-2 and manages to go the other way for that double there?**

JOSH ELANDER: Just phenomenal at-bat. I mean that guy has good stuff. I mean, Stone's sinking and throwing some cutters, mixing in some four seems today kind of out of nowhere.

But just battling through grinding through instead of giving in right there. And that was a huge point in the game to be

able to get that ball in the gap, score a few more runs and give us some breathing room. It gave us the opportunity to go to Krenzler and see what he can do, and as we're trying to get some questions answered over there as well.

But he's a guy that can hit. He's always hit. He's going to hit. And he wants to be in there. So it's good to see him take advantage of that moment.

**Q. Josh, in your experience, how important is this tournament, not just in terms of seeding and things like that, just feeling good going into the big tournament?**

JOSH ELANDER: That's a great question. It's just over the years, just to see how different coaches are approaching and whatnot, and that's up to them how they do it.

But a theme around here for a long time is you get a chance to win a ball game, let's go play a game. I know our players are excited to be here. We have some returning guys, but a lot of these guys, it's their first time they've been here because they're freshmen, some transfers and these kids in other conferences watch this tournament on TV and want to play in it, and I know our guys are excited to be here and play baseball.

It's kind of unique this year where we don't play South Carolina for the first time in who knows how many years. We get to play them, and then Arkansas is not on the schedule, now we'll get to play them. Just a chance to get better. And this time of year, one more day with your guys, with your team, might as well take advantage of it.

**Q. On Cam, is there anything you see early when he's on the mound that you feel like is an indicator maybe he has his stuff that day?**

JOSH ELANDER: Well, I think with him, he's saying "my stuff, my stuff." He's up to 92, 93 early in the game today.

Again, we needed stuff for feeling good, we need to make him eat more. He's skinny. But he will be. And he'll take care of his business. But his tempo, he said he thinks he's moving slow, I think for him at times moving slower in his mind, I mean, I don't want to speak for him, but when his tempo of his delivery, when he gets into the back hip and rides down the mound, his arm sequence is so much better and it gives him more take off the heater and more angle when he tries to drive it into the right-handed hitters.

But he's tough on himself. But his stuff's plenty good enough. It's always been good enough, and only will continue to get better as he gets older and is around

Keegan and the resources we have at Tennessee. His stuff is just fine.

**Q. What went into Stone not being in the lineup today?**

JOSH ELANDER: I think with Reese thing that originally he was going to be, and I don't have any issue telling you guys that. But then I just think that looking at some of the numbers, stuff for match-ups, and then Reese goes down, there were so many different combinations we could roll with.

And I know it was important with Levi, when we recruited him four or five years ago, to get to catch. He's done a great job and working his tail off back there. So that's when we've gone out of our way to make sure we continue to check that box.

He's caught on some mid-week games, and I know this is unique being in the SEC Tournament, but Stone's someone that I have a ton of faith in, and I love that kid, and he's a winner. But we are very fortunate this year we are able to move some pieces around and we are very deep behind the plate at catcher. And they're all capable of doing it at a high level.

**Q. I forget which week it was, but recently you said you all were working on some things with Henry and his swing. Is this Henry running into form coming off the injury and about him at his peak?**

JOSH ELANDER: Yeah, I think Henry's, he's such a smart hitter. You go to the conference he was in and this conference, navigating new places, new people, new crowds. He's very talented. Just the way he goes about his whole process, he's meticulous with his prep, but he also asks great questions. And instead of surface level, yes or yes, sir, he's like, okay, why are we doing this? Or what is the objective?

But he's got a really good feel for his swing. Essentially, he's a great hitter. We all know that. I know he's hitting whatever it is, 309. A guy we have a ton of confidence in. It's just sometimes we just want him to stay in attack mode and be loose, not to think his way through his at-bats and compete because he's pretty dang good when does that.

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