

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Missouri Tigers

Coach Kerrick Jackson

Kam Durnin

Postgame Press Conference



KAM DURNIN: This is going to go down as one of my favorite parks I've ever played at. It's beautiful. It's a natural surface. You can't ask for a better spot to play the conference tournament.

Q. What is your biggest takeaway for this season and how the teammates that you've had since the fall, who would you like to thank that has helped you around the year?

KAM DURNIN: It's been such a blessing to be on this team, to play with these guys, these coaches. Not only that, for me being a Missouri guy, to represent the state of Missouri, to have people from my hometown, my high school, come and support me during home games, honestly, especially this past week, I thank the Lord every day for just the opportunity to get to chase my dreams in the state of Missouri, where I grew up and just to represent Lake of the Ozarks.

Q. What do you see for the future, for next year and years beyond for Tiger baseball?

KAM DURNIN: Obviously we didn't have the year we wanted. But in terms of growing a program, we were better than last year. And just continuing to go take steps forward.

Individually and as a team, some people take the elevator, some people take the stairs, but in the end, it all ends up in the same spot.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. We talked about the quick start. You guys came out and got it going. It felt like, again, like yesterday you were in the fight and then just couldn't return some shots there. When did you kind of feel this thing kind of getting away from you?

KERRICK JACKSON: I think when we go to get away from Brady there, as he started to fall off, we were still in a good situation, I thought. You bring Sam in to be able to get out

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THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Missouri head coach Kerrick Jackson and shortstop Kam Durnin.

KERRICK JACKSON: Obviously, not the way we wanted it to go. Guys on the bump ran out of gas. We didn't make plays when we needed crucial plays to be made. Those guys going on short rest, we just -- when it fell off, it fell off in a hurry.

That's a good offensive ballclub. And when we made mistakes in the middle of the plate, they didn't miss those mistakes.

Q. Probably couldn't have asked for a better start. You come out there, and you guys get the early lead. Seemed like the dugout is hyped. So to go along with that, when you entered this tournament with that mindset knowing you guys had to win it, what's that grind been like mentally?

KAM DURNIN: Taking it one game at a time. We came in with nothing to lose, with the underdog mentality, playing with house money. And just trying to figure out if we were good enough and see what we've got.

Q. You personally, down the stretch, you've been one of the hottest hitters in the conference. What's worked for you and allowed you to take that next step?

KAM DURNIN: Just going back to just being on time. When I'm on time and my body is synced up, I feel like I can compete with any pitcher, anybody.

Q. You had a home run yesterday and another one today. What's it like playing in this park compared to some of the other SEC ballparks?

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of it, and he makes some good pitches to put us in the position to get out of that. We don't make some plays. We could have minimized some of the risk there in that inning.

I think once we had to go get Sam -- our freshmen are freshmen. They've had moments where they've been really, really good as freshmen and they've had moments where they had freshman moments.

And Sam wasn't at 100 percent and so that was the one thing I told him is, hey, man, you went out there and competed with the best of what you had. And that has to be good enough to get us out when you go and you do your job.

And then as Isaiah came in there again, another freshman who's had some really good opportunities and flourished in those opportunities. But then we hit the guy with the slider. And it's a really good pitch for him, and if we're just able to attack the zone a little bit more, we put ourselves in a little bit better situation, be able to work out of that.

Then we still have a chance to minimize that and then we drop the fly ball. That's when things just kind of really unraveled.

Q. Just watching your team from afar, it's obvious your guys are improved. There's a lot of new talent. But it's a results-oriented business. How do you feel about the future and do you think you're going to get a chance to lead this program going forward?

KERRICK JACKSON: Yeah, I mean, they brought me in here to do a job, and that job was to build. I knew what the job was when I took it. Not expecting things to happen overnight.

Unfortunately, I know that that is the mindset in our league, is that it's supposed to happen right away. But we're in a different situation. And as I said, I recognize and I recognize coming and getting the job, I think people around the program recognize the direction that we're moving in and how we have to go about doing that.

So for me, we're just taking that next step in building obviously you see our youth that we have we put ourselves in a situation where next year we'll be better than we were this year.

Q. Development-wise and heading into the next season how do you continue this momentum from the win yesterday over Ole Miss, but also the momentum that you had ending this season, how do you continue to build your program heading into the future?

KERRICK JACKSON: Well, the biggest thing for me is to challenge our guys on being able to, now that the season is over, look back and say, where could we have been better? What were the things that were in our control when you were on the field that we could have put ourselves in a better position? And then making you sure that we fix those things because we had some hiccups and we had some self-inflicted wounds that we put ourselves in a bad situation.

So can we minimize those, which I think we will be able to do with experience? And then now, as you move forward, minimize those mistakes and then put yourself in a situation where you take advantage of the opportunities that are there.

We're still in that space of anticipating a loss as opposed to taking the win. And that's something big that when you are in this environment, specifically in the SEC, you can't anticipate the loss. You've got to attack the win. You've got to know that the win is there. You gotta challenge the other team to stop you from doing things to keep you from winning.

And we're not there just yet. We're still learning how to be able to put ourselves in a position to win in the margins of the game.

Q. You really got on a roll with the ABS yesterday. As you leave Hoover, do you have thoughts that you can share on maybe what you think will improve the game and then a few things that might need to be tweaked?

KERRICK JACKSON: I will wonder if we want to tighten it up. We're a little bit wider and bigger than the Major League zone. I wonder if we'll tighten that up a little bit. When you think about the parameters that we were given with the ABS system that we're using, now, when you add the ball in there, that makes it wide at that point.

And so can we tighten that up? Do we choose to tighten that up?

And I think we're going to work out kinks. We did the double bag for the first time in the SEC Tournament, and we instituted that and we had some things going -- which bag do you touch, does this guy touch that bag, those type of things? I think with the ABS it will be the same thing.

I think the interesting thing for me will be, will we look to use ABS only in SEC play, but knowing that we go some other places and they're not going to have it? So then what does that mean for our kids if you're used to having it during conference play but not in conference play you don't have it and how do we do that?

Q. What does it mean to have a guy like Serna behind the dish that's helped you guys out during the course of the year and the international pipeline with Juan and Eric, just being outside the realm of the United States, how do you feel like the recruiting can expand from that?

KERRICK JACKSON: I think when you talk about Mateo, it kind of goes back to what we're talking about from a building and developing standpoint. He's a third-year player. His first year behind the plate, things were a little fast on him.

Last year, he got a little bit better. This year, he's a really good catcher. He understands the game. Obviously he does a great job of receiving and blocking.

So him and other players that we're getting show kind of what we're doing. Then when you talk about getting those players outside of the continental United States, I think we want to be able to get players that we believe can help us be successful. So we're going to continue to do that.

Q. You talked about this Mississippi State offense and how they kind of get rolling. Now that you've seen them on the grass, what's your final impression of them as they get ready to go to the NCAA Tournament?

KERRICK JACKSON: Again, it's an offense that there's no holes in it, necessarily. Even the guys that may not have a lot of power numbers, they're going to grind out at-bats. And when you make mistakes, they're not going to miss.

That's what happened with us today. When we made mistakes -- we made some two-strike mistakes, we let the count get in the hitter's favor. And then now when you have to pour that thing in there, I mean, just look at Ace's last at-bat right. He covers the plate so well with two strikes and is able to just continue to flip pitches off and flip pitches off and flip pitches off and then draw that walk in that situation.

So they do a really good job. If you miss in the middle, then again they have the guys in their lineup. They can drive the ball out of the yard and/or drive the gaps. So I think they will have success when it comes to that aspect of it because they are an offensive lineup.

Then, obviously, you know, look at their starter. He's going to come out. He's going to attack you. And we had our opportunities with him, that we had a plan that we wanted to execute, and our guys got off of that a little bit. And then when he came back to the middle, we showed that we had

the ability to be able to take some quality swings off of him. But he's able to adjust, and again you saw him start to cramp up there a little bit. So again short-rested, what does that mean for him? Now he's going to have full rest going into next weekend, so I think they will be a dangerous club when it comes to the tournament.

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