

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

Georgia Bulldogs

Coach Wes Johnson

Brennan Hudson

Joey Volchko

Postgame Press Conference



how you felt what Matt has been doing since the fall to pretty much uphold his mechanics with everything?

JOEY VOLCHKO: I've been playing with Matt for, this is year three now. I know how he goes about his business. There's nobody I trust more to come out there and finish the game. If I pass it to him in the sixth or the seventh, it doesn't matter.

Q. Brennan, you guys come to this tournament, for all practical reasons, like you all had a lock pretty much wrapped up. But why was it important for you, the team, to come out and have success, get a win, get a couple of wins, whatever it's going to be, going into next week?

BRENNAN HUDSON: I really think it's just about us being competitors. We love to come here and compete. And obviously we want to keep on winning. And it's another tournament. This is another chance for us to come and compete and win another trophy.

I think that's really all it is. It's all about competition and all of our guys just being winners and loving to do it.

Q. Joey, you talked about settling down in the first inning a little bit. In an environment like this, how do you do that?

JOEY VOLCHKO: Just tons of practice and having all these road starts. They were great atmospheres, and I have a lot of fun. Part of why I'm sitting in this chair is because I'm a competitor, and I want to win. Sometimes you have to dial that back a little bit just to establish the zone and let that carry me deep into the game. That's been the biggest part for me.

Q. You guys have both played Mississippi State four times this year. Joey, what works in your opinion against their batters. It's difficult lineup to kind of navigate. And also for Brennan, same thing same kind of question with the pitchers, kind of what works, what doesn't work against those Mississippi State pitchers?

Georgia - 5, Mississippi State - 3

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by head coach Wes Johnson, Brennan Hudson and Joey Volchko.

WES JOHNSON: I felt Joey came out and really attacked the strike zone early. Looked like they were coming out ready to swing. He executed -- his fastball today was really good, especially the command of it. Landed some sliders when we needed them.

And then obviously we turned the game over to Matt Scott. I thought Matt came in, first inning was just okay for him under his standards. But then after that, I thought he settled in and threw the ball really well the last three innings. He was really executing his cutter, getting it to the areas to induce soft contact or ground balls.

Then obviously on the offensive side, you look at it, and Kolby Branch there in the first, to get our first run, does what old players in this league do, just take the sac fly, get them in.

Then you obviously you know Brennan comes up and gets off a really good swing and puts one in the seats. That really, really, obviously, settled the game down, I think, from things on our end.

And you never can -- it's really hard to walk sometimes. And you look at what Kenny Ishikawa did right there to walk to get us that last run. Sometimes when you're up three, there's a little the temperature's a little lower in that dugout than being up one or two.

Q. Joey, what was working for you with Daniel Jackson behind the dish pretty much this full nine, and



... when all is said, we're done.®

JOEY VOLCHKO: They're an extremely well-coached team with a great approach. I had the chance of playing one of Brian O'Connor's teams at Virginia, when I was at Stanford and (indiscernible) was the same thing -- well coached, good approach. They had great at-bats and they were making me work. So they've kind of done that this year twice as well. Just gotta be tougher.

BRENNAN HUDSON: I think from us as a hitter side it's all about just making sure we get our good swings off. I mean their pitchers have really good stuff. And that's what you're going to see in the SEC. And you just have to be able to get great swings off and string bats together and make your runs count when you can. And I think we showed that tonight.

Q. Brennan, what's it like to hit in this lineup? And how much does it allow you to just be yourself when you've got so much protection around you?

BRENNAN HUDSON: For sure, there's so much confidence just from the other guys around you. We have so many fun bats and fun guys just to be around. And, like I said, the confidence comes from the guy behind you, you know he's going to get it done if you're not able to. But the same thing with the guy in front of you. You're going to pick him up every time and just keep on going.

Q. Joey, I know you and Matt have talked before. You guys didn't come to Georgia, didn't follow each other, so to speak. But two straight games now you guys really seem to -- he's feeding off what you're doing, and I'm sure you're looking to set him up. Talk about how that combo's been working these last few weeks?

JOEY VOLCHKO: It's been awesome. Like I said, I see him as a starter, and I really trust to give him the ball regardless of the situation. I know he believes in his stuff. He doesn't think there's anybody better on that field than him.

So it's been awesome to kind of follow his career. Because we've been together for, this is year three now. Just watching him compete. It's contagious, I feel like I see him as a leader for sure.

Q. Brennan, the offense the past couple of years has struggled here. What was the approach entering the game?

BRENNAN HUDSON: I think still being the same team we are. I think just from the lineup we have this year, we're a little bit different. We have guys who can string hits together and more extra-base hits that aren't purely homers.

And obviously the ball's been flying this week a little bit better than it has in previous years. But I think just taking advantage, like I said before, just putting good swings on it and trusting everybody in the lineup is what it takes.

Q. Coach, Brennan maybe gets a little bit lost in the shuffle in your lineup just given some of the superstars you have there. But how much has he given the lineup length this season with what he's done?

WES JOHNSON: Yeah, you look at it, the thing that's really impressive about him is his ability to take his walk. He has very, very low chase rate, which allows him to get into some favorable counts.

I think that's probably the thing, when you look at -- we call him Huddy -- you look at Huddy, his ability to get into fastball counts because he doesn't chase and then get off a good swing is what has made him really good this year. Gosh, what's he hit, 17? Yeah, homers, 17. Yeah, it really lengthens your lineup.

Q. Want to ask you what I asked the players, you all had a lot of already kind of wrapped up here, but how important from your perspective to come here and have success, get some wins and not just be satisfied with where you're at?

WES JOHNSON: With a team like this, every team's different. You wish that they weren't or whatever, but this one's just different. They want to play. They want to play games. They're always competing at practice. They want to practice.

It's like I said, I can't count the number of times we've had practice. We've practiced -- practice is formally over, coaching staff goes upstairs, and all of a sudden we hear the ting of the bat and guys have come back in and they're hitting on their own.

So they just love to play. So when you have guys who do that -- one of the ways to help them stay focused is you play the game. And that's what these guys want to do. They wanted to come here and stay for a couple of days and play and try to get better.

Because it's like I told them, the alternative is we're running live at-bat on Sunday. So I think they would much rather would play against someone else.

Q. Similar question I asked the guys, but Mississippi State, a fourth time you played them this season. This time a little bit more gritty of a game than it was at

Dudy Noble. What did you see in the scouting report of Mississippi State over the last two or three weeks?

WES JOHNSON: I mean, I thought their starter did a really good job. I really liked that young man. I think he's really good. He's got a high ceiling and has a chance to be -- he held us down and thought he threw the ball well. Then they went to another young left-hander and he threw it well.

That team's really good. You know, think about this. I mean we talked about it beforehand. They're the eighth-place team in this league. How deep is this league? I mean, those guys are really good.

So, yeah, there's nothing that stands out. You just knew it was just going to be the old, you know, to use that old cliché, it was going to be a heavyweight fight. It was going to take 15 rounds to get it done. And I think it did.

I mean, you look at it obviously they punched there in the ninth. The Sullivan kid, he hit a really good pitch and got it up in the air and got it out of there.

I think they're a really, really solid club. I like their pitching, I like their hitting. And I think they've got a chance to make a deep run in the tournament.

Q. Mississippi State having eight of nine guys that are above .300 right now, how do you feel that the preparation has been a big component from the early April series against them? And also just the coaching staff with Will, Nick and Brock that have been a huge part of your core, entering from the fall.

WES JOHNSON: Anytime you look at, you try to look at swings. I think my time in Major League Baseball kind of helped me because you would look and you may go in and you play a team in April, and this player, a really good player, an All-Star-type player, swinging at X right, whether he's hitting sliders really hard.

We broke them down this time, we really tried to see if there was trends they'd been doing lately. I don't want to get into what we do too much scouting. I mean, we saw a few things that were just a little bit different. I thought they had a really good plan today. They hit some balls really hard. We play in a really big ballpark. They just they went at us, and so it was good.

Q. You mentioned Matt settling in. What made the difference for him before the eighth inning to where he just started throwing strikes?

WES JOHNSON: I think he maybe wasn't all the way ready when we put him into the game. I probably should

have given him another hitter. We kind of rushed him out there a little bit. I think all it was, was when we got to -- what would that have been? When we got to the seventh, he was just loose. And you looked, I thought he was good after that.

Q. With the ABS challenges, obviously had a couple go your way and a couple not. What was your first impression of that?

WES JOHNSON: I thought it was phenomenal. Big fan of the ABS. I've been a big proponent of it. It's what our game needs. You think about it. You had a couple go your way. You had a couple not go your way. Couple of them swung some at-bats for them and for us as well. And that's what we need. Let's not guess anymore if we don't have to. And let's do it well. But big fan.

Q. Every coach has a different philosophy when they come into conference tournaments. You said your guys love to play. Could you talk about just a little bit of the importance of playing in Hoover, having success, and are you all doing the weekend type of mentality heading right into Saturday/Sunday, you play today and you get an off day tomorrow. But is that kind of the weekend thinking, hey, this is a weekend series in the SEC?

WES JOHNSON: Yeah, we've got that mentality. We're not going to stress people too much. We don't feel like we have to. I mean, you look at Joey, got him at pitch 68. This guy could go 110 if we needed him to. So it was just a good time. I didn't feel like I needed to stress Joey too much.

And that will continue to be our theme as we move forward now. We're not going to stress the pitcher too much. Matt got in perfect work. 39, 40 pitches, 39. Right in there. So that was good for him. I feel comfortable with the work he got in now as we get ready obviously for next week, but also getting ready for Saturday.

So we'll continue to do that, and just play players and get some different looks because obviously we play a ton of match-ups.

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