

# Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Sunday, May 24, 2026

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

## Georgia Bulldogs

## Coach Wes Johnson

## Daniel Jackson

## Kolby Branch

### Postgame Press Conference



And when you can do that you're just going to get really good outcomes. And even when effaced a lot of pressure on the bases -- first and second, first and third, you know; I feel like there was a runner on almost maybe every inning -- and instead of being afraid of what there is, he kind of faced adversity really well and kept throwing.

**Q. Kolby, I know you guys still have things you want to accomplish. As someone who came back, what does this moment mean to you?**

KOLBY BRANCH: It means a lot. Talking with Tre and Paul Farley and all these guys that came back for another year, it means the world to me and all those guys. Just to see a team go out there and have confidence in themselves, belief in themselves, what we talked about all year long.

Then you go out there and you do it, it means a lot to me. When I watch it and I see it I get chills thinking about it. This team is special. And we play our tails off and we love to compete.

**Q. Daniel, being the most outstanding player of the year for this course of the year and also just winning the MVP, what does it mean to accomplish so much historic feat, but just also for the other guys that have helped you, even from the fall?**

DANIEL JACKSON: Yeah, it means a lot. Personally I couldn't be more pumped. Honestly I feel the most special thing is, I feel like I got this because we won as a team out there.

And winning the regular season and winning this tournament, that means more to me than anything. And it was just awesome, this whole week, the rain delays and everything, spending so much time with the guys and the comeback versus Florida and rolling into today, five in the first after sitting around for three hours, I mean, it's just super exciting.

**Q. Kolby, how big was Arcamone's home run early to settle things in give you guys that big lead?**

Georgia - 11, Arkansas - 1 (7)

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Georgia.

WES JOHNSON: I thought you, look at the game, obviously we had the rain delay. I thought Paul Farley did a phenomenal job. Arkansas came out. I think they were maybe 1-for-7, six, seven, eight, somewhere in there, with runners in scoring position in those first four innings.

That just speaks to how he was able to maneuver and guide through traffic, make pitches when he needed to. Got some hard-hit balls right at some guys and we were able to make those plays. I think from an offensive standpoint, obviously Trey and Daniel and Ryan Lujo there early, Kolby, everybody just getting off good swings, putting a lot of pressure on them.

I think one of the things this team does really well is our chase rate, and works the count in their favor. Then when they get the count in their favor, they're able to get off a good swing. So we did that really well today.

Now it's time, we'll celebrate this for the bus ride home, but then tomorrow we've got to turn the page and get ready for Friday.

**Q. Daniel, what did you see from Farley today? Why was he so able to be so successful?**

DANIEL JACKSON: Farley, I mean he just did a really good job of throwing all of his pitches in the zone for strikes, keeping the other team off balance, not giving away any free bases, kept attacking the zone with all of his pitches and with a good mix.

KOLBY BRANCH: I think it was 3-0 at the time, runner on, and kind of a big spot in the game. You take that next jump, it's a big deal. You go up 5-0 compared to 3-0. It determines whether Arkansas is in the game or out of the game.

You take that jump to start the game. And for a guy like Arcamone who hasn't got a ton of plate appearances as of late, he steps in there, first pitch he swings at I think he takes it deep.

Really proud of that kid. He's working his tail off. Just good for him and good to go out there and put a good swing on it and put the Dogs ahead.

**Q. Daniel, you were here last year, but what do you think makes this team different entering the postseason?**

DANIEL JACKSON: As a team, the competitive spirit. We don't play with a lot of emotion. It's very -- kind of like playing with energy. We don't ride this wave of, you know, up and down.

I feel like there were times last year where it felt like we were scoring 10 or we were scoring zero. I think the team is a lot more dynamic in the ways we can score. And we like to play for fun. And I feel like it shows on the field.

**Q. I know Coach talked about it yesterday. Is it safe to say that you're recommending Guitar Hero for back home?**

DANIEL JACKSON: Sure, 100 percent.

KOLBY BRANCH: I'm not a Guitar Hero guy but I know that Daniel came out of the room yesterday because we roomed together on the road. I was, like, let's take care of business today. Let's get a win today. Kind of joking around.

And he goes you know I really want to win I want to win for Guitar Hero. I wasn't to keep playing another day. So he was really excited to play Guitar Hero. And I think he might have made a promise of getting Guitar Hero back in the locker room or in the team room or something like that back home. So we'll see if he stands up to that, but the boys are pretty excited about it.

DANIEL JACKSON: I feel like that kind of adds to our competitive spirit. They actually have a head-to-head one where there's two guitars and you're playing against your boy and you don't want to miss any notes on that thing. And that's pretty electric.

**Q. Who is the best?**

DANIEL JACKSON: Bryce Callaway, really good. Justin Byrd, really good. We've got some good guitar players.

**Q. Obviously a lot of people back in Arkansas followed your career pretty closely given all your years there. How much does this mean to you professionally, personally, what the program's been able to do?**

WES JOHNSON: I think it's a combination of a lot of hard work. Over the years, you just put your head down. I think we'd be here all day if I could thank the people that I need to thank to be where I'm at today.

I mean, when I took the job at Georgia, Josh Brooks and President Morehead, just so passionate about their vision for athletics and where they wanted to go.

Like I say, you can't get here without a lot of help. And those guys -- what they've done not only for the university but for baseball and all of our athletics is really hard to put into words because there's a lot of good coaches out there. There are.

And you need support and you need good people behind you to do it. And I mean, that's just -- as I'm walking around out there, I'm thinking about all the people who have impacted me along the way. It's more about them than it is about me.

**Q. Farley has given up one earned run in the last 12 and two-thirds. That's the last five appearances. Have you seen anything different from him as of late that's led him to have that success?**

WES JOHNSON: As you guys know, there's a lot of good players with stuff now. It's about confidence and belief and trust. There's a lot of coaches who have their mantra on attacking the strike zone, so to speak.

But I tell the guys, I don't care where the ball goes. Make them beat us. And you look at Paul earlier at times -- there's times he was -- not only him but a couple of our other guys, they like to nibble. They don't want to give up the homer. It's, we have to change our mindset. We're not going to. We're going to get the guy out. Let's try it out, let's try thinking that.

So what you're seeing in Paul is a lot of confidence and trust and belief, not only in him -- and then you can't ever forget, when you've got guys like Kolby Branch playing behind you and Daniel Jackson, who is a really good

catcher, your defense is strong. We can't shy away from contact. And I think that's what you're seeing with Paul, he's really attacking the strike phone.

**Q. Going back to that day you took the job here. Obviously you came in as a national champion at LSU. How quickly did you envision putting yourself in a position where you could say you're an SEC champion head coach?**

WES JOHNSON: I don't think, guys, it's going to be real cool if I say, oh, two, three -- I don't know what those plans are. You just know this: You're going to attack today. You're going to go out there. You're going to try to do whatever you can do to make your program better, whether it be a recruiting phone call or getting whatever. I mean, we could talk about a lot of different things, but you've got to win that day.

If you get too far out in the future, I think you lose your work a little bit. I didn't have some time. No, we're going to go find good players and try to win right now. I don't think five-year plans have to exist anymore, especially with the portal.

I didn't have a timeline. Just let's go get good players and let's go try to win as fast as we can.

**Q. It's hard enough to win one championship in this league. Put into perspective what it means for this team to win both the regular season and the tournament, knowing they're very different animals?**

WES JOHNSON: My gosh, we'd be here all day. But this is my second -- obviously Mississippi State in 2016 when we won the league. Was at Arkansas when we got to the finals in the tournament in '17. Lost to LSU maybe 5-2, 5-3, somewhere in that ballpark.

And I remember looking back at both of those moving forward and going, wow, it's almost harder to accomplish one of those than it is probably to get to Omaha at times just because the league is so unforgiving and man, nobody in this league lets you up off the mat if you are stumbling or fall down.

It's really, really hard to do. I don't know, we have statisticians around, I don't know how many teams have done this, but it's really hard to do, man.

**Q. What does it mean to have such big support from your alumni, even guys that you have coached with in such a short period of time that have made it to the up end level of high affiliated Major League Baseball that have played with Georgia, and just the big alumni**

**support from that end as well?**

WES JOHNSON: I've talked a lot about David Perno and even Steve Webber back in the day about what they've done for this program. Obviously him winning the first national championship in 1990, and what David Perno did here to pave the way to make baseball important at the school because he was winning.

I mean, he was assistant coach in '01 and they go '04, '06, '08 with him and as the head coach, and getting to know all those alumni and how important it is to him and how they want Georgia to get back there has been great.

And I think it's huge. I think Gordon Beckham. I think about Gordon and what he did for the university. He's kind of that high, high draft pick who was the face of the program. And what Gordon still comes and gives back at times has been phenomenal.

And all the alumni. Not just Gordon, obviously. But the Cal Farmers who are in the Big Leagues or Alex Webb, who just recently retired, and having those guys around and coming to different things has been phenomenal.

It's like I tell our players all the time, you can never forget that you're getting nice things, you're getting stadium renovations because of the people who came before you, and they did a good job, and they paved the way for you to have these things. So we take our alumni very seriously and obviously want them to be a part of everything we do.

**Q. You've mentioned, and the guys have talked about how much they love playing together, what's the moment that you realized that?**

WES JOHNSON: Man, probably sometimes you've got to feel that on a road trip or during a certain game. And we had done some things earlier in the year. But I tell you, probably Mississippi State.

People are going to point to the A&M series. We took 2 out of 3 there. And, yeah, I kind of felt like we were starting to gel maybe a tick there, but I don't think it was until we got to state. And then it was like, okay, these suckers -- you know, I mean, we saw a really good pitcher in that game, too, against Mississippi State, and that young man was throwing the ball really well.

The guys just were coming up and down the dugout going, we're not losing this game, we're not losing. And I was like, okay, it's starting to turn, and we did. And we got the win, and then it's kind of snowballed since.

**Q. Do you have a status update on Jordy? Obviously**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**we didn't see him today, didn't see him yesterday.**

WES JOHNSON: We're going to protect some guys at this time of year who's got some dinks and dunks. And Jordy could have played today, but we're just going to protect those guys.

Once again, it's like, yes, you're trying to win every game you play in this time of year, but you also have to be mindful of what's coming on Friday. And if we had some other players with some dinks and dunks, like if Trey couldn't prove to me after he got hit by a pitch that he was 1,000 percent healthy, he wouldn't have played.

Jordy has just a few -- Jordy could have played if it was Friday, I guess maybe I'll say that, but we just felt like we didn't need to push the envelope.

**Q. What's been the biggest difference for Jordan Stephens over his last several outings?**

WES JOHNSON: A lot of Paul Farley stuff. You look at both of them. It's confidence and belief. We do a lot of things, I don't want to get into. But you go back to his start at Troy. Troy is a really good team. Obviously, they beat us earlier in the year. Comes out against them, goes four innings and looks like he did today.

He's gotten to that point, too, he's kicking himself for the one walk. I said Jordan, we won the game, man, we're good, you struck out two and gave up zero, you're okay. And so I think it's confidence, belief and trust.

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