



# 2012 BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

DIVISION I

## GAME 2

### POSTGAME QUOTES

COLUMBIA SUPER REGIONAL • CAROLINA STADIUM • JUNE 9-11

## South Carolina 5, Oklahoma 1

### South Carolina Head Coach Ray Tanner

I'm kind of at a loss for words. To be able to get a chance to continue to play after the way we started...you start reflecting throughout the season. As I told the guys in the huddle at the end, it didn't start like we wanted, but we played. The team stayed the course and was resilient. We lost some close ones, but if you stay, sometimes it works out. We started to win our share in the league and had a chance to go to the postseason.



I'd also like to change subjects and recognize Coach Galloway and the Oklahoma program. He's a class act. I'd like to recognize our staff here at South Carolina – Clark Cox, Donnie Lindler, the grounds crew for their hard work and dedication through this inclement weather, and our great fans for staying with us and trying to hang in there. They did a great job for us today and came out in a situation that looked like it would be more rain. I'm really appreciative of the effort everybody has made.

#### *On if the freshman are "freshman" anymore*

They really aren't. It was tough on those guys. It's not easy playing for me as a newcomer. There's an initiation. You have to earn your stripes. As long as I've coached and as long as I get to coach, that's not going to change. That's how it's supposed to be. You don't just roll in here and have anything given to you. You have to earn it. Sometimes there's a step back. I think it was tough on these guys at the beginning because it is a talented recruiting class. They understand quickly that it's not about you. All those pats on the back you've had in the past, it's over. All these older guys you better listen (to), learn, try to respect the game and play it. They've grown up a lot. They were good players. You see Joey (Pankake) at the end of the day making that big play. He couldn't make that back at the end of the fall. They worked hard.

#### *On the decisions to have Tanner English bunt with two strikes*

My mindset was pressure. I wanted it to be with the opposition and not with us. He can really run. The first situation where you ask him to bunt with two strikes, I told him don't worry about bunting to first or third. Bunt it back to the pitcher. At least you keep it between the lines. Then the last one bunt for a hit with two outs, (Oklahoma) had a lefty on the mound and (Tanner) can really run. There's a lot of things that can happen, and you have a way above average runner going down the line. I thought it was a situation that if we could execute, we could get another run.

#### *On bringing Matt Price in early*

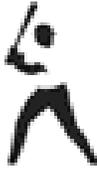
In another situation, I may have waited until there was more damage before I brought Price in. Even today I was thinking maybe two innings, maybe two and one third innings, but not the nine-out deal. He was ready to go; that wasn't the issue, but you never know. We had a chance to win, so I threw my marbles in the ring. That's the way I approached it. If we lost that game, we would have compromised some of our pitching. I can't imagine there's another college pitcher maybe in history that's been in as many key situations as Matt Price has been in, regular season, postseason, College World Series, whatever. He's performed. When he goes in, regardless of who you're playing, they know who he is. 'This is their guy, and he's pretty good.'

#### *On TJ Costen's pinch run from second to home*

I told TJ they'll try to make a play on you at third base. This is the type of game, they're not taking the out (at first). It's late. It's not a force play. You have to try to be down. I don't think he thought there would be a play. He was halfway sliding. Then it rolled down there (into the fence) and that was a good feeling.

#### *On the College World Series field*

We've been headed that way a few years. Some of the household names many, many years ago where every year Texas was there and (Southern California) was there, it's been a change. Certainly with Stony Brook, Coach Esposito told me from day one that they're really good. We talked about scheduling them in the future. I put the hex on it and said that ain't happening. It's a great story. I read (LSU) Coach Mainieri's comments. This wasn't a case of a team that rolled in here and got hot. They're good. They're really good. To go to Alex Box Stadium and do what they did, that's impressive. That's not cinderella really. They're beyond cinderella. They're a proven commodity. There's a lot of parity in college baseball. It's true. The resources have gotten so much better. I started when you didn't get your score in the paper and have a trainer to go on the road with you. We've grown a lot. It's great to stay with it and watch it. I think it's incredible. Of all the things that have happened in college sports and the NCAA, yeah I'm biased, but it really doesn't get any better than the College World Series in Nebraska.



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#### Junior relief pitcher Matt Price

*On his thought process when entering the game*

When I came in, I kind of figured they'd try to bunt. After the first pitch was a ball and the guy took it, they tried to do a hit and run. I threw it up, he swung and missed, and Dante (Rosenberg) made a good play. LB (Dantzier) made a great play as well. We got the guy out at third. It's just the mindset to go in there and try to control the damage.

*On switching from starter to closer midway through the season*

I just did what's best for the team. Once Coach talked to me about going back to the pen, I just went out there. It wasn't a major transition for me to go back from starting to closing because the past two years I've done it. These situations I don't try to fold. I just thrive in these situations.

*On the newcomers*

We knew that we had a good group of guys coming in. The freshman that were starting – Tanner (English), Joey (Pankake), (Grayson) Greiner – these guys at the beginning they were kind of sluggish, but after they got a few games in, they started growing. I think me, Michael Roth and Adam Matthews have helped these guys grow into who they are now.

*On why this team has had a good postseason streak*

We don't know. We're still trying to figure that out. After those SEC tournaments, we don't really like the practices. Once we start the postseason, we just try to go out and win every at bat and every pitch.

*On if he gets nervous*

I get nervous all the time. I think it's always good to have a little nervousness in you. If you have the butterflies, then that's a good sign.

*On the fans at Carolina Stadium*

The fans have been amazing the whole time. Just coming into the game, it gave me some chills. After the game, I was just taking everything in. This could possibly be my last game at Carolina Stadium, so I was just taking everything in. The fans have been great.

#### Freshman left fielder Tanner English

*On his bunt single*

It's been a while since I got a bunt-fair down, so I figured I was due. I just tried to get it in play. I thought I'd have a fair shot to beat it out, and I did. The coaches trust me doing that. It's a good situation to do it.

I was just trying to get the ball in play. A bunt with two strikes is tough to do. Again, I just tried to slow it down, get the ball in play and make something happen. It ended up working out.

*On the group of newcomers coming in and helping lead the team back to Omaha*

We had a good group of guys come in. We were fortunate to have a great group of older guys to lead us and help show us the way to play ball here. We're just glad we can step up and help the team.

*On being a part of working towards three straight national titles*

It's really cool. Coming in, everyone has high expectations. You don't want to let that get to you. You just want to come in, help out and play ball. It was cool watching them win two world series, and now I'm honored to be a part of the team going to Omaha and trying to do the same thing.

#### Junior second baseman Chase Vergason

*On being a part of a team going to Omaha*

Since I was 12, I thought about what it would be like. It's almost surreal. I'm here getting to do it. It's an honor being with these guys. I can't wait.

*On his double*

I was just trying to get a good pitch and get a good swing on it and drive it somewhere. We needed a few more cushion runs. I just tried to pop it the other way and get it to fall.

*On filling in at second base this season*

We just go out with the mentality everyday to give it all you've got. Coach will put whoever goes on the field and can get the job done. I'm out there doing the best I can and giving the fans a show.

*On his offense heating up*

I'm just up there swinging hard. I feel like I tried to aim the ball a little in the beginning half, but I'm going back to my ways and I'm just going to hit it.



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#### Oklahoma Head Coach Sunny Golloway

I asked our sports information department on the way up here - our normal guy is back home; his wife is due at any time, Craig Moran - the question I asked is what's the most losses Oklahoma has had since I've been there for seven years. We got close to it. It's 26. We lost 25 games. We lost 25 and got to go toe-to-toe with a team in the super regional who has back-to-back national championships and has an unbelievable environment. I think it's a tribute to the young men who represent the Oklahoma baseball program. To lose 25 ballgames and still be playing today when only 11 programs were still playing college baseball when we woke up... I think the 25 losses - I know we won 42 - but it truly is a tribute. It's hard to do. It's hard to lose that many games and get this far. You have to win some key games and play with your backs against the wall. Our guys did that. (Stephen) Okert I thought pitched very well. We didn't defend well. But give South Carolina credit. They put the ball on the carpet and forced the issue.



#### *On the battle to make it to the super regional*

I'm extremely proud of this group of young men. They represented the university in a first-class manner. We were a bubble team with three weeks to go. We had to play well to get in the NCAA Tournament. We had to sweep Baylor at our place and defeat a tough Sanford club two of three and play well in the Big 12 Tournament. To go to Virginia and win and come here, hopefully we pushed South Carolina a bit. Hopefully we tested them a bit. We were short. I realize that. You don't want to admit it at the time, but I know baseball well enough to know where our holes were in the lineup and where our holes were defensively. We were exploited today.

#### *On if he soaked up the atmosphere at the end of the game*

I didn't have to do it on the pitch because I knew if I could, to let them clear and not get run over. Coach Tanner is a class act. He was right there when the team cleared. Ray is a class act. He's a heckuva coach. He's a good friend. He's a guy that if my son didn't play for me, I'd want my son to play for Ray Tanner. His coaching staff was right there behind him.

#### *On what about South Carolina stands out in scouting reports*

The pitching does. You go back and look at (Michael) Roth and (Colby) Holmes and you look at the pitching staff and try to figure how you'll score knowing what you have. Other coaches will have different weapons. I thought we pitched the ball well. Had we scored earlier either game, it could have been different, but it didn't. There were some breaks that didn't go our way. We were going to push the envelope in some way. If I had the opportunity to coach again, any group, against Michael Roth, I think that I would know how to attack it. I really do. I thought about that after the fact, but I wasn't in the conference and didn't get to compete against him but one time. Watching him on TV and seeing him in person is two things. There's something I would do. I won't say today and won't say period. I'm not saying I'm right, I'm just saying that's what I would do.

#### *On last night's pitching duel before the rain delay*

It was a treat. It really was. It was special. Both of them. Two hits to one hit in that situation and with the rain and not knowing how long. Nothing against their guy, but our guy goes back out there and it starts raining really hard. I got on the bus and told our guys I was extremely proud of all of them but especially Jonathan Gray.

#### Senior first baseman Evan Mistich

##### *On the mindset after South Carolina took the lead*

We were still fighting. At the time we were only down 2-0. We had a lot of innings left. We had three more trips to the plate. We just kept fighting. We've had our backs against the wall all season long. Today wasn't any different. We just kept fighting.

#### Junior relief pitcher Steven Okert

##### *On the wild pitch that scored a run*

With the wild pitch, we called a fastball out, and it just got away from me. With the push bunt, I definitely wasn't expecting it. As a lefty, we follow to the third base side. He did a good job pushing past me. It was a good job by him.