



## **GAME 4: Tennessee 10, Cincinnati 6**

### **Tennessee Head Coach Tony Vitello**

#### ***Opening Statement...***

"It's nice to have donors, alumni, fans and administration that are very supportive of our team. I recycled a message nonstop about this weekend: embrace the chaos, because it is that time of year. I don't know that this game was more chaotic than the one before us, but both were kind of what you'd expect—all hands on deck, as it relates to pitchers and a lot of good swings out of all four teams. (We're) fortunate at the end of the day to be one of the teams that was able to win."

#### ***On Marcus Phillips' last three outings...***

"I think (he's) just improved. Progress has been his M.O. since he's been here. Part of it is due to hard work and the coaches working with him, but there's also a pretty good combination he's working with of being blessed with a lot of talent and yet, especially last year and the year before, so far away from being as good as he can be. I've said it reluctantly that his best days in baseball are a long way from here. That'll be good for pro ball stuff, but for now, it's just nice each time he goes out you don't always get the byproduct or score that you want, or the scoreboard shows it, but there's been significant progress. That is an area he's improving at and has improved at and has made progress."

#### ***On Vitello's reaction to Dean Curley and Gavin Kilen's offensive performances tonight...***

"Dean's (Curley) is the one that sticks out. He's freed himself up to play, and he's done very well defensively. He's done well on the bases, and the at-bats have been really good. To be honest with you, it's kind of obnoxious. Like any kid you've ever recruited, if you're a recruiting coordinator, (the) guy's hitting the ball hard but right at people. That's probably an overused statement as a hitter, but he's hit a lot of balls hard that he hasn't gotten credit for in recent weeks. He's also doing it so often that he is getting some credit. It's great to see. Gavin (Kilen) is kind of this year's Billy (Amick). Billy was in such a great groove, he had the appendicitis pop up, and it takes him out of his rhythm. I think Billy had a homer in the first game back, but at the same time, it did take him a couple weeks to get back into a groove. Gavin has been very accepting of his new role at shortstop. He has played well there. The base-running has been special out of Gavin, and I think he's most known because he can hit."

***On Vitello's decision to start Marcus Phillips on the mound...***

"I'm just thinking through it. As you said, it's been a year of a lot of decisions to make. There's a lot of 50/50, this could work or that could work, but as it relates to the last four or five weeks of pitching—I don't say it arrogantly, because I definitely don't have all the answers—but as coaches putting our collective heads together, there was no doubt at all of the vision we had. After the Auburn series, let's not ask too much of Liam (Doyle). We knew the tournament might require somebody to come around quick, but we like the lefty-righty combo, and it's gone well for us. I'll take either guy in either situation. There have been weekends where one is better than the other, or one is our best guy out of the two, but it's a great one-two punch. (We're) not looking to go with strategy other than we didn't want to wear Liam (Doyle) out with the blister at the time. He was asked to do a lot in a short amount of time with Auburn, with the relief appearance."

***On the team's vibe this weekend...***

"The vibe the whole year has been good. It's been like Marcus (Phillips) as an athlete, progressing and pushing forward all year long, starting with meetings in the fall. At the same time, if I'm going to be critical coach guy, it hasn't been as good as it can be this weekend. It's called a team sport for a reason. You need every single guy to enjoy this. There have been some guys either trying to do too much or frustrated because they're not perfect. It's been great, but I think it can be even better. This is such a special deal. Marcus (Phillips) mentioned the crowd. To play at home makes it a little bit sweeter but overall, just to be involved in this thing is crazy. I never got to do it (as a player). I'm jealous. We just need to enjoy it. I think it's been good, but it can get even better."

**Tennessee Junior Catcher Cannon Peebles**

***On what was working for him and Marcus Phillips today...***

"What I see out there is he's very poised. I think it helps our team relax a little bit on defense. He was just out there for the next task. If something didn't go his way, like I said, he's very poised, and he can move on very quickly and focus on getting the next job done. That's been the basis of this team, and it worked tonight."

***On the return of the "Drew Gilbert celebration" and how that changed the vibe of the team...***

"Well, it popped up on my phone one day, and I thought it was cool. It's something that I think a lot of the young guys on this team, even everybody, grew up watching. I hadn't had a double in a while, so for me I was like the next double I get, I might just pull it out if I feel like it, and then I just ended up doing it. Luckily, the team said that they loved it, so I was just like, I might as well keep it going."

***On how he was able to turn around his offensive productivity...***

"I always knew, because if you don't, you know it probably won't happen. You always have to believe in yourself no matter what the circumstances are. Simply put, I always knew it I felt like."

## **Tennessee Junior Righthanded Pitcher Marcus Phillips**

### ***On how rewarding it was to pick off Kerrington Cross in the fifth inning...***

"It was rewarding, for sure. Every out is important; I've been working on it a little bit every week. It's something that I never really put a lot of attention toward, but as I've been working on it, I feel like I've been making some pretty good progress on it, and it's been showing."

### ***On the challenge of dealing with baserunners while on the mound...***

"It didn't feel like there was a lot of people taking off earlier in the year, and once we got to SEC play, everybody in this league wants to win. They find ways, different ways to attack hitters and pitchers and stuff like that. So, the learning process is every day you can learn something new, whether it's on the mound or in catch play or through bullpens, which is what helped me a lot, just working on a quicker step to home plate and progressing week-by-week."

### ***On when he knew he would be able to put up a performance like tonight's***

"Man, I've always been a baller. I like to play. I like to be around the game. I've been around it my whole life. So, always being around the field and wanting to progress in my abilities, that's telling for how sharp my game could possibly be. I was excited to go tonight. We had a good crowd, and it was a fun one."

## **Cincinnati Head Coach Jordan Bischel**

### ***Opening Statement...***

"Yeah, just tip of the cap to coach [Tony] Vitello. Tennessee swung the bats well. They took advantage. They had a good hitting approach. They didn't give away at bats. We had a few free passes that bit us, but some of that's credit to them too. They didn't chase a whole lot, and obviously, three talented arms they ran out there. We knew they'd be good. We knew we'd have to play really, really well. We competed, but just didn't play our best baseball. Again, tip the cap to Tennessee."

### ***On what the biggest turning point in the game was and if there was one...***

"No, I don't think so. Obviously, you know, big innings win and lose a lot of these games. Yesterday, it won one for us in the fourth and the sixth. It took a really tight game and gave us some breathing room. Even then, Brandon [Scheurer] came out, could have blown it open, kept it where it was at and kept us in the game. But no, not really one spot. I think they had chances to turn the lineup over, because a lot of guys got on base, and we have to face those guys five to six times they're often going to do some damage."

### ***On how he feels about the quick turnaround...***

“Well, I grew up playing and coaching (NCAA) Division III ball. You're lucky if you get 14 hours between games. Usually you get 25 minutes, so this is a long rest. I mean, in the league, you get things like travel curfews, and you have to turn around quick somedays. So, if we're not excited to play baseball in the NCAA Tournament, then we have a lot bigger problem than how many hours we slept.”

## **Cincinnati Redshirt Senior Infielder Kerrington Cross**

### ***On what his mindset is going into tomorrow...***

“The mindset doesn't really change. This is kind of like another game. If you treat it as an elimination game, then you are kind of going to get nervous, and mentally, not there. So, I think the goal is just to tell them, ‘Hey, it's another day, keep the energy high. Who wants to be out there the most?’ If we just play our style and we want to be there, I think you're going to see the results at the end. If we treat it like an elimination game, we are cooked from the start.”

### ***On what it was like facing Marcus Phillips...***

“I was seeing the ball pretty well. He's got good stuff. His fastball was coming in pretty good. He's a legit guy, but I thought, I don't think our full lineup, top-to-bottom approach was all necessarily there. I think we could have had some bigger at-bats. We definitely took our walks. We struck out and struck out a little bit too much, but overall, he's a good, good pitcher. I mean, we knew coming in that it was going to be tough, and we were going to have to grind. He beat us today. I mean, it's plain and simple as that.”

## **Cincinnati Redshirt Senior Righthanded Pitcher/Utility Brandon Scheurer**

### ***On how he attacked the Tennessee hitters...***

“Yeah, it's a really good lineup. We all knew that coming in, but we talked in our pitchers meeting this morning. That's kind of a good matchup for me, specifically, just because of how I throw in some of my stuff. Credit to them. They made it really tough on me. Even some of the guys that I just felt like every guy was two-two or three-two count every at bat. So, they're a really good lineup, and I knew that coming in, but I was just trying to attack the zone, and just trying to keep us in it.”