

College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Sunday, June 5, 2016
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Paul Mainieri
Michael Papierski
Alex Lange
Greg Deichmann
LSU

PAUL MAINIERI: Well, it turned out to be a pretty exciting ballgame tonight, didn't it. The way we started, it looked like -- first of all, I thought our guys did just a tremendous job against a really outstanding pitcher. Very selective at the plate and I think we were making him work hard and we drew three walks to load the bases, and then Greg came through with a big two-strike base hit; he smoked that one down the line.

Then we got fortunate because their outfielder went for the ball, and the rules are very clearly stated that if you do that, the ball becomes live. So turned out to be a good thing for us.

We continued to do a good job. We were getting the runners on base. We were just having trouble advancing them and then getting them in, so our offense just kind of became stagnant there, and of course we had the runner thrown out at the plate when Papierski came through with a really clutch double.

We just were a little bit frustrated there because we couldn't extend our lead. But when you have Alex Lange on the mound, you still have a good chance to win. He was -- I've run out of superlatives to say about him. He's just an amazing competitor. Obviously he has talent.

But there's something that makes him different than other people, and that's his competitive zeal and he just has an ability to rise up and make a big pitch when he really needs it in clutch situations. He deserved to win tonight, so I'm glad we were able to get it.

I think we can play a lot better than we played tonight overall but we're happy to get the win tonight and get to move towards tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, a few comments, please, about your outing.

ALEX LANGE: I think Pap did a great job behind the dish. You can't do anything as a pitcher without a great catcher, and so hats off to him. I think he did an excellent job. Really got me in line in certain situations and that's big when a guy is able to do that. So I'm just very fortunate, very blessed to be here and it was a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Greg, talk about your at-bat in the first inning That coach touched on.

GREG DEICHMANN: Like Coach said, we did a great job of making him throw a lot of pitches, and to draw three key walks to load the basis. Went down 0-2 right there, and I knew I had to fight and put a ball in play, hopefully a fly ball, get a sac fly. But he threw a curveball, saw it pop up out of his hand and I was able to turn on it and hit it down the line. He ended up reaching for it and I just kept running. They gave it an in-the-parker.

Like I said, the guys in front of me did a great job of drawing some walks and getting on, and I was just able to capitalize on that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach touched on this yesterday about making you bat right-handed here. Talk about your two at-bats, you got two base hits. Talk about your adjustment batting all right-handed, please.

MICHAEL PAPIERSKI: I haven't hit righty-on-righty since I think I was 11. But I definitely have been feeling a lot better righty. My bat path is flatter.

Just trying to barrel up balls and hope it finds holes and hit it where people aren't. You know, Alex came out today and threw his butt off. Dude always goes out, he's going to give you seven innings every time, just fortunate to have him on our team.

Q. Did you have to jockey to come back out after that rain delay? What was the discussion?

ALEX LANGE: No, I was pretty locked in. Coach Mainieri was just kind of sticking with me. It was never even really a question to come out. I knew it was going to be a quick delay, so I just went to the training room, stayed hot, stayed loose.

It sucks that it happens but you've got to stay locked in. There really wasn't a discussion on you're coming out or whatnot. Just kind of tried to stay locked in.

Q. Did Alex show any rust after the rain delay?

MICHAEL PAPIERSKI: No. No. We went out and threw before the game started again, and he was just the same, the same as he was the first I think five innings. He came out, we started with a breaking ball for a strike and was off and running from there.

Q. Was there any problems with you with command of the ball after it started to rain?

ALEX LANGE: After it started to rain?

Q. Grip or anything?

ALEX LANGE: No. No. That was all me messing up. Just going down the mound too fast. No, it wasn't due to the rain. Just my arm was lagging behind a little bit, but that's just something I've just got to continue to work on because that's kind of been a problem this year, going down the mound too quick and leaving balls up and in. I wouldn't attest anything to the rain.

Q. Greg, it wasn't the most majestic home run in the world, but can you talk about what you saw as you turned first to keep running; because sometimes you could easily just like kind of held up.

GREG DEICHMANN: Like I said, I made contact and I saw the first baseman's mitt go up. And for a second, I thought he was going to snag it, but it kind of faded away from his mitt. As soon as it bounced, I was digging for a double. I knew it was kind of headed for the tarp so I picked up Nolan and he was waving me all the way. So I kept going and got to third and he was still waving me, so I just kept running. Like I said, I thought he was going to snag it for a second and ended up under the tarp.

Q. That's two home runs in this regional since the SEC tournament started. What has changed at the plate?

GREG DEICHMANN: Honestly I think I've just been a little too selective before the tournament started. Coach Cannizaro and I talked about some of the plate coverage that I have and kind of capitalizing on that and using that. I've been kind of too selective looking for a pitch kind of through a keyhole. Started swinging at more pitches maybe off the plate a little bit. Like I said, not looking forward through that keyhole and just using that plate coverage and the leverage that I have.

Q. Seemed like the few innings you were pitching in the rain, you weren't laying off the breaking ball. You were throwing it even in the rain. Is that how good of a feel that you had for it, even when it was

raining, even when it was wet, that you could grip it and throw it as well as you are?

ALEX LANGE: I'm not going to throw it if my hand's wet. That's why I kept going to the dirt tonight. The rosin bag was wet. I really wasn't even thinking about the rain honestly. So it wasn't something that was even crossing my mind.

I was just making sure my hand was dry, because it was more the humidity that got me at the beginning of the game than it was the rain I would say. That's my go-to pitch, so I can just put that in my back pocket. Just had to continue to throw it and we were successful with it.

Q. Curious, at end of the 7th, a little extra spicy, a little stare it looked like. Was that extra motivation or just something you had --

ALEX LANGE: I don't remember doing that (Laughter). I don't know. Just in the moment, this atmosphere, it puts juices through you and it's so much fun to play in and you have so much adrenaline. I didn't mean to do it. I didn't mean to offend anybody. I was just going out there and doing what I could.

Q. Probably one of the more agonizing decisions as a coach, whether to send him out after that long of a delay. Did you have a time frame in mind that you were not going to bring him back?

PAUL MAINIERI: Yeah, that is a tough thing because obviously my biggest concern is always to do what's right for Alex and his health and his career.

But we all knew it wasn't going to be a long delay. You call it a long delay but it wasn't a long delay really. We were just on the edge of a front and I was in constant communication with the guy with the Dopplar, whatever they call that, with the radar -- you like that word, huh. Thank you.

At first, right away, as soon as the delay started, I asked AD: "What do you think, how long can we wait?"

And his response to me was "45 to an hour." He said, "You know, he hasn't thrown in ten days. We've taken good care of him all year. As long as he's feeling good," and we kept him staying loose during the break. He was back in the trainer's room doing all kinds of exercises, and we had a little extra time getting his arm ready. He was only at 72 pitches and I felt very confident and comfortable sending him back out there. I didn't think we were putting him at risk one little bit.

My bigger concern, and somebody asked the question, was about what his command was going to be like more than his velocity or being tight or anything like that. He hit that kid with that one pitch that got away

from him, and so I was a little bit concerned. He kept telling me he felt great, felt a hundred percent.

He did politic to go back out there for the ninth. I was definitely going to take him out after eight innings and let him talk me into it. I told him, "One batter gets on, you're out," and sure enough, a couple pitches in, the guy got a base hit and so he was out.

I thought Hunter Newman just came in and was marvelous again. He has been as important to us as anybody in the turnaround -- not turnaround, but the hot streak we've had at the end of the year. What a job Hunter Newman has done for us.

Q. Lineup reshuffled, Greg moves up, worked out for you. What went into the thinking of that lineup?

PAUL MAINIERI: We don't really have a prototypical middle of the order. I keep looking around, I don't see Blake Dean and Matt Clark and Mikie Mahtook and some of those guys, but we do have a bunch of scrappy guys. I've been hitting Chris Reid in the middle of the order, and he's not really a clean-up hitter. I just thought it was time to get him out of there and to a more comfortable spot.

Greg has been swinging the bat pretty well. He's a little bit of a streaky guy and I think he's on a streak right now, a good streak. I thought putting him up a little bit might just pump him up a little bit and obviously came through with a big hit for us right there.

Q. Why does it seem like teams have so much trouble with this ground rule about the ball going under the bench? Twice in three regionals, twice this year.

PAUL MAINIERI: I can't answer that question. All I can do is go over the rules with them. What happens, I don't know if you asked this of Wayne when he was in here.

On Thursday, after we had our pre-tournament meeting, they take all the coaches out with all the umpires and they kind of ask me to take the floor and go over the ground rules.

I'm very explicit, and I say to them very specifically that if a ball goes underneath the bench in the bullpen and comes out, it's a live ball. If it goes under the bench and stays under the bench and the outfielder holds his hands up and the umpire verifies it's under the bench, it's a ground rule double. But any time a player goes for the ball, the ball becomes live immediately.

And I say it exactly the way I just said it to you. I said that before every game this year with whoever our opponent is, and I say it, told them all that before. It's

written in the ground rules. The ground rules are dispersed to every time. So really it's the obligation of the other team to know the ground rules and the kid clearly went for the ball and so it became live again.

Q. You were watching that ball roll down there. I saw, you were watching everything. He put his hands up -- you were right. He put his hands up and then -- take me through your process of what you were thinking as he was going down there.

PAUL MAINIERI: I was hoping the ball wouldn't go under the bench, first of all. I thought it was going to cost us a run. I thought the runner from first base would have scored easily on the ball, and if it becomes a ground rule double, bad luck for us.

When I saw the kid hold his hands up, I was a little bit discouraged because I thought it was going to, at least momentarily -- remember there's nobody out and the runners were going to be on second and third, so you'd like to think you were going to get them home anyway.

So when the kid held up his hands and the umpire started running out there, I just figured it was going to be a ground rule double and then the kid clearly started digging for it.

I know what the rules are, as we just explained. So at first, the umpire called it a ground rule double but then good umpiring, they all got together and talked about it. I'm sure the other umpires reminded the umpire at first base that we had been very explicit in going over the ground rules, and he was man enough to ante up and made the right call and we were just kind of fortunate.

Q. I know the umpires gathered to discuss the call, but you obviously pointed out to them that they might need to discuss the call. When was the last time you came out of a dugout that quick?

PAUL MAINIERI: Well, I knew we were right. I knew what the rule was. I just wanted the umpires to get together to make sure they made the call correctly. I wasn't trying to get something cheap. I mean, that was what the rule is.

If I wasn't so explicit in the way that we talked about it, I know all the NCAA reps were with us, as well, and the grounds keepers were there. I mean, everybody was there and witness to the conversation. So we just wanted to make sure they applied the ground rules properly.

As far as me coming out of the dugout quick, I can't answer that quick. I'm 58 years old. I don't move as quick as I once did.

Q. An unorthodox way to get you to where you

want to be but you find yourself in the regional championships. Your thoughts?

PAUL MAINIERI: Unorthodox, in what way?

Q. Time-wise.

PAUL MAINIERI: Oh, with the rain and everything? Oh, gee, whiz. I tell you, it seems like we do this every year, though. Last year we were playing games at 10:15 at night and finishing at 1:30 in the morning. I remember a super regional a couple years ago with Oklahoma that we had a rain delay and it rarely rained.

It happens. As we've talked about a lot, we try to get the kids into a state of mind mentally to deal with whatever circumstances happen. In the fall, we start from the get-go. I actually hope that we have some lousy weather days in the fall where it's raining or it's cold or it's really windy because it gives me an opportunity to make them practice in those conditions.

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Wayne Graham Grayson Lewis Jon Duplantier Rice

WAYNE GRAHAM: Well, I was proud of our guys for battling back. But I thought that Lange probably threw the best breaking ball that we've seen this year. That breaking ball thrown low like that; and he had good command of it, because he kept it down and didn't leave it up much. And obviously he's got a good fastball.

I just thought we were the victim of a guy pitching a really good game and had a lot of heart coming back after that 40-minute delay.

So tip your hat to him and tip your hat to our guys for hanging in there and making a ballgame.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about the first inning, please.

JON DUPLANTIER: You know, just got out there and kind of just lost myself. Lost myself, fastball wasn't there and I was fighting with myself trying to find it. To be honest, I really -- the first inning, I just completely lost myself, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: You had two hits including the home run. Talk about your night at the plate, please.

GRAYSON LEWIS: I was trying to be aggressive all night. Like Coach said, Lange is obviously a great pitcher and I was just trying to be aggressive and get a good pitch to hit and when I do, put a good swing on it and that was my approach tonight.

Q. When you look at Jon in the first inning and Jon the rest of the game, almost like a completely different guy. What did you see from him in the first and then as the game went on?

WAYNE GRAHAM: Well, it's easy to make a judgment about that, because we're all human. It looked to me like he was guiding the ball, trying to guide it into a location instead of throwing the hell out of it.

Q. Just from your point, I know you had two good

at-bats against Alex, but what was he doing so well all night, just from a hitter's perspective?

GRAYSON LEWIS: Just getting us to swing at the breaking ball down. It's obviously a really good pitch and throws it pretty hard and has a lot of movement. He was just burying that and we were swinging at it.

Also, he had pretty good command of his fastball, throwing some nice low and away fastballs and coming in when he could, and he just did a great job.

Q. The inside-the-park home run in the first inning, what did the umpires tell you about what exactly happened and the ruling they made?

WAYNE GRAHAM: Well, they said, you know, he held up his hands, and that would have been fine if the ball was indeed lodged, and it was. But then he started digging for it and you can't do that.

Once you hold up your hands, you have got to leave it where it is so the umpire can go down and see that if it was indeed lodged, and if it was indeed lodged he has to lay off of it. Can't dig for it.

Q. Despite the six walks, you kind of settled in there and only allowed two hits. Did you feel like you got into a groove just a little bit? How did you feel about your final five innings?

JON DUPLANTIER: After the first inning, and pretty much every pitch after that, I was kind of just battling myself. I took it to heart that I was going to try to beat myself up from a mental standpoint and try and overcome some of the things I was battling with in the first inning.

Those last five innings, I mean, I was just trying to get up there saying, you know what I got this, throw the ball, and go back to doing what I can do.

Q. Did you feel like the momentum was shifting after Ford's RBI double in the top of the sixth; did it kill y'all's momentum, that delay that y'all had?

GRAYSON LEWIS: I mean, I wouldn't say killed it. But we definitely had a lot of momentum going into that rain delay, but I guess we can't really do anything about that. I mean, Ford had a good at-bat right there to get that double to get that run in. But I mean, what can you do.

Q. Did anything, you battling yourself, have anything to do with the weather, how hot it was, steamy, holding the ball, anything like that?

JON DUPLANTIER: No. I actually prefer it when it's warm outside. No, I don't think the weather had anything to do with it.

Q. It's been such a variable all weekend with the weather. At least you know when you're playing and who you're playing tomorrow hopefully. Can you talk about having to battle through the loser's bracket?

GRAYSON LEWIS: We're going to have to fight. Southeast Louisiana, they are a really good team and we are just going to have to battle like we have been all year, just keep pitching good, and playing good defense and getting timely hits when we need them.