

College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Saturday, June 4, 2016

Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Paul Mainieri
Greg Deichmann
Kramer Robertson
Jared Poche'
LSU

PAUL MAINIERI: Obviously we're thrilled to get off to a good start in the tournament.

But before we talk about the game, I'd just like to send out our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to -- it's been a tough week for college baseball, first Allen (Todd) Oakes, the pitching coach at the University of Minnesota after a long battle with leukemia.

And of course everybody knows that a young man, Donny Everett, freshman at Vanderbilt, passed away yesterday. I don't know if you noticed, a lot of the players on their hats had Donny's initials. Just to let the Vanderbilt family and the Minnesota family know that we were thinking about both of their losses. It's a tough day and it puts things in perspective for all of us.

As far as our game goes, I just thought it was a really solid performance again by our team in every way. Very reminiscent really of our win against Mississippi State at the SEC Tournament. I thought Jared set the tone. He pitched great all night. Typical fashion: Wiggled out of a couple of jams with some clutch pitches.

Jake Fraley gave us a big boost there in the first inning after Duplantis's walk. I didn't know he could hit a ball that far, quite frankly. I told him he was starting to remind me of Deichmann after he hit that home run.

I just thought we had a lot of great at-bats. We knocked out their starting pitcher, who we knew he was good. We knew he had a good arm, and big, strong guy. We were kind of hoping to play the game at two o'clock in about 100-degree heat with humidity and we were planning on making him throw a lot of pitches. As it turns out, we were able to get him out after three innings, anyway.

We had some really good at-bats, some clutch hitting

and strung a lot of singles there together to get some runs. I thought our bullpen did a terrific job. Really a good workman-like performance in our first game. I didn't think our young players that haven't played in post-season showed any nerves at all.

I thought they have been playing like they have been playing all year, especially at the tail end of the year. It was a good start for us. We have a lot of work to do but it was a good way to start the tournament.

Q. Eight strikeouts, no walks including striking out the side in the fourth. Talk about your outing, please.

JARED POCHE': Yeah, I wanted to go out there today and do whatever I can to give the team the best chance to win. You know, big thing with me was the no walks. That's kind of been a little nemesis of mine throughout the year, so that's one of the bigger stat lines for me.

Like I said, I just wanted to go out there and throw up as many zeros as I can and give our team a chance to win.

Q. Kramer, two doubles, obviously the hit by pitch. I guess question is: First, how is your hand; and secondly talk about your night at the plate.

KRAMER ROBERTSON: First off, no fractures that we know of. We got it checked pretty quickly. I'll be okay. Obviously pretty sore and swollen but I'll take care of it tonight and all day tomorrow and I'll be ready to go. So no need to worry about me.

At the plate, that first inning was about as bad as it could get for me. I went in the dugout after that and kind of regrouped and got myself together and wanted to have some quality at-bats. Just put some good swings on the ball. Did what I could with the pitches that he gave me and fortunate to get us going there, and the guys behind me came up with really big at-bats and really big hits to drive me in.

So I just thought it was a really good performance all the way around, and that's what you have to have to win games like this.

Q. Greg, three RBIs, home run in the seventh and single in the third. Talk about the two at-bats, please.

GREG DEICHMANN: Well, my first at-bat of the night, I got myself in a hole, 0-2, pretty quick. Earlier in the cage, Coach Cannizaro and I were talking about some plate coverage that I have and swinging at some balls that were maybe off the plate. I didn't do that my first at-bat.

Second at-bat, I got that same pitch when I took when I was down 0-1 in my first at-bat, but I was able to put a good swing on it the second time around and get that single.

Throughout the rest of the night, I continued to look kind of over the middle of the plate. And again my fourth at-bat I got that pitch and I was able to put a good swing on it, get under it a little bit and drive it out of the park that way.

Just working on some things, swinging at some balls that make I've been taking lately and just trying to put some good swings on them.

Q. Jared, do you feel about the same as you did against Mississippi? Paul compared it to the Mississippi State win. Do you feel about the same, fastball, breaking command as good as it was then?

JARED POCHE': I think so. I made a couple mistakes this game, two doubles that they hit were pitches that were middle of the plate and those guys put good swings on it. So hats off to those guys. My fastball coming in was a lot better as far as the last two weeks, and when I'm landing my breaking ball early on, definitely helps out for me.

Q. Kramer, how important did you think Jake's home run as a tone-setter for the night after a long layoff?

KRAMER ROBERTSON: Yeah, that kind of set the tone for the whole night. He's our veteran and he's been in this situation before. To put us ahead there right off the bat, I think it really loosened everybody up and made everybody play a little bit more relaxed.

That's what great players do. They make big plays in big games, and that's what he did that just set the tone for the whole night, and I know that it kind of just relaxed all the guys that haven't necessarily been in this spot before. That's what we have to do; we have to be able to lean on veterans and he came through for us.

Q. Jared and the rest of y'all, how did you pass the time today? And did it help having been through the same situation last year?

JARED POCHE': For me, me and Jake actually went to eat at that little restaurant down the street. My family

came to my house and just sat around waking on a text from Coach and when we got that text, just got here, get mentally locked in as quick as possible.

PAUL MAINIERI: Last year, remember the rain delays we had?

JARED POCHE': Yeah, last year, very similar situation. Going through that definitely helps.

It's hard to stay locked in for eight, ten hours, or whatever it was, but to be able to just get right back into that mental mind-set and ready to play a game has definitely helped out going through it already.

KRAMER ROBERTSON: I did the same thing. We got to leave the field, which I think was a good decision, because it kind of made us feel like it was a night game and it wasn't like we were just at the field all day delayed. It wasn't too overwhelming having that long of a delay. We were able to go home and relax and get our mind off of it and get here and refocus.

I think the only difficult part was not being able to take grounders or hit for however I don't know how long it was, eight, ten hours, whatever it was. As the game went on, we started to lock in more and we knew we were going to have to do that. I've got to credit our guys for being able to lock in there.

GREG DEICHMANN: Yeah, this isn't necessarily our first go-around with weather this season. Earlier in the season, we had LA-Tech rain delays; I think Southeastern, as well. Just we kind of talk about staying focused, and especially when we know that weather is coming in, especially with a weekend like this, coach tells us, it might be an on-and-off-tarp-type game. So we have to stay as focused as long as we can, even if we are sitting around for five or six hours. When we put the jerseys on and step behind the white lines, we have got to get focused.

Q. You touched on it in Hoover, the advantages you would get if you had won some of the games in Hoover; did you go in with the mind-set that if you win tonight, you are guaranteed not to play two tomorrow; was that advantage in your said, knowing that?

KRAMER ROBERTSON: I don't think so. I think we are just a really confident team right now. We are taking it, sounds cliché, but we are literally taking it one inning, one pitch at a time and not really looking ahead.

We are just focused completely on these guys tonight and trying to do whatever we could to win. I don't think anybody was looking ahead too much. We were completely focused on getting the job done tonight.

Q. What time did you send the team back and tell them to go home? And there was a Tweet by Voodoo BBQ that said most of the team was at Voodoo BBQ. What players went to the BBQ joint?
PAUL MAINIERI: It was about 3 o'clock or so. Around 3 o'clock, we sent them home, but I didn't go to Voodoo BBQ. I don't know who was there.

Did any of you guys go?

JARED POCHE: I wasn't at Voodoo. I went to Jay's barbeque.

Q. (Regarding father playing quarterback in high school and college.)

KRAMER ROBERTSON: My dad actually went to high school here for two years and played at Louisiana Tech and had a lot of success there as a quarterback.

Q. He was a high school quarterback --

KRAMER ROBERTSON: Yes, sir, he taught me -- Randy, yes, sir.

PAUL MAINIERI: The only question, Ted, is who was a better high school quarterback --

KRAMER ROBERTSON: I'll let you ask him that.
(Laughter.)

Q. Similar to what Chandler asked, especially with the way the delays happened today, with the schedule, how important was it to win so that you could get a full night's rest and not have to play until 7:00, versus having to play two?

PAUL MAINIERI: So the players are gone now, I can tell you the truth. Because they have to take it one game at a time, but believe me, the coach thinks about things like that.

Obviously winning the first game; winning the first two games in this tournament in my opinion is very critical. If you win the first two games, you have to win three games. If you lose one of the first two games, you've got to win four and play five; it really stresses your pitching staff.

So getting this first game was very important. But no more important than tomorrow night's game. Yeah, it was great to get that victory so we don't have the quick turnaround, having to play early in the afternoon.

You know, this weather delay was tough to handle, but had we been scheduled to play the second game of the day, it would have even been worse and we'd be playing at nine o'clock in the morning tomorrow.

So all those people that second guessed my decision always to play that first game on Friday, please let that rest, okay. This is the main reason we do it.

I will mention this, as well; that last week at the SEC tournament, we played a lot of late-night games, so we are kind of used seeing the clock tick and hit midnight and being the next day. We just felt kind of like it did last week in Hoover quite frankly, and guys responded great.

I'm really proud of them, the way they handled the whole delay and the long day and the game late into the night. I thought they came out tremendously focused and played really well.

Q. I don't know if this is a question for Mike or for Andy, but what is the thought process on having Mike hit only right-handed now against right-handed pitching?

PAUL MAINIERI: Yeah, I was wondering if you noticed that.

Mike is a switch-hitter, but he's a natural right-handed hitter and lately his swings have been significantly better right-handed.

So Andy and I have been talking about it for a couple of weeks actually, and we broached the subject with Mike earlier this week and we said: We'd really like to just see you hit right-handed in the playoffs, in the post-season.

His swing is a little flatter, a little more consistent and we felt that he could be more productive even against right-handed pitching. When he took batting practice during the week, Nolan Cain would throw BP to him and snap off some breaking balls.

So for the first time in probably several years, he would see a right-handed breaking ball batting right-handed. So he was able to track some pitches and just get comfortable against it. Hit that ringing double into left field which was huge. I just think he just looks more confident up there right-handed.

When he goes away and plays in the summer, I told him, you go back and switch hit then, but for right now in the post-season, I think we need you to do what we think gives you the best chance to help our team win. I think he looks more confident out there right-handed right now.

Q. What's your thought process with the bench in a regional and dealing with a lot of delays and stuff?

PAUL MAINIERI: The bench? The reserve players? Well, I don't think the delays have anything to do with

that. I think we are just going to use them as we feel necessary.

I thought Poche' gave us a good six innings. I was glad to get Latz out there. Had Deichmann not hit the home run, Latz would have gone out for another inning. But once we got the six-run lead, I felt confident that we didn't need to utilize him for another inning, which would allow him to be able to bounce back quicker and maybe more effectively.

Russell gave us a really good inning, and it was great to get John Valek out there. I thought he looked great. He were able to get a couple guys off the bench including Jordan Romero. I thought it was important to get him an at-bat tonight.

I hated to give a green light with a six-run lead. It was kind of on the borderline of going against baseball etiquette, so to speak, but it's an NCAA Tournament and it's only a six-run lead. I gave him a green light, and he was able to smoke one there. Getting his confidence back I think is really an important thing, as well.

We got Dawson in there just because I wanted Kramer to take an inning off, and Brennan Breaux has been utilized like that all year as a late-inning pinch runner, defensive replacement. You keep all those guys sharp by using them as much as you can.

Q. With Jared in the last two or three weeks, is it as simple as he's just commanding his fastball better?

PAUL MAINIERI: Yeah, and I think his breaking ball, too. Ad has been having a tendency to go to his breaking ball even quicker in the games, even to the first batter of the game and I think that's helped him settle into a groove a little bit quicker with getting all of his pitches working.

And it was vintage Jared, though. He didn't dominate at times, although he ended up with a lot of strikeouts. Every inning it seems like he had runners on base. I think it was maybe only one, one-two-three inning. Kramer had the error in the first inning, and I think he had a one-two-three inning later on. He pitches in the clutch when he needs to.

College World Series: Baton Rouge Regional

Saturday, June 4, 2016

Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Erid Madsen

Mark Krueger

Craig Brinkerhoff

Utah Valley

ERIC MADSEN: Well, you have to give LSU a lot of credit. They are a good club. Very disappointed. I just didn't feel like we played as well as we are capable of, too many strikeouts.

But the opportunities that we had early that ended in strikeouts just disappointing. I think we are a better club than what we showed tonight but again you have got to give LSU a lot of credit, because they are very talented.

Q. Craig, you had a double and a single, two hits tonight. Talk about your night at the plate, please.

CRAIG BRINKERHOFF: My approach, I was at first, I was a little too fast. I was a little late. I was trying to do too much. My later at-bats, I tried to slow it down and just simply put the bat on the ball, and it worked out pretty good for me.

I should have come through for my team. My first at-bat, I feel like I let them down. I've just got to do better.

Q. 2-for-4, talk about your night at the plate.

MARK KRUEGER: Seeing a lefty, lefty on lefty, I just wanted to slow myself down especially against a guy that's throwing really well all year. Just really wanted to slow myself down and kind of get my hands going. Just trying to put the bat on the ball and doing whatever I could for my team.

Q. Maybe all three of you guys could talk about today, being a long day and rain delays and everything.

MARK KRUEGER: Getting here, we were all super, super excited. I think we had a lot of nerves going, waiting for the rain. Then just waiting it out, I think we kind of settled in. We went back to the hotel just waiting to see what happened.

Once we came back, kind of our nerves settled down. I think we came out and did too much in front of a lot of people, but coming in, I think we were very excited and

then just waited it out.

CRAIG BRINKERHOFF: Yeah, I think when we first got here, like Mark said, we were just so excited to be here, like the atmosphere was awesome. We felt the energy in the stadium and then when we got back later, we started slowing down. When the game got going, the atmosphere, the energy, got really loud.

I felt like we as a team really sped up things and we didn't calm ourselves down. That's kind of what carried on throughout the game. I felt like sometimes through the game, we slowed ourselves down and adjusted.

ERIC MADSEN: Yeah, I actually thought it was going to help us, because we were amped up, and again, it's excitement, the first regional, and these guys have done such a good job all year to get here.

When we did have the delay and get back, I thought even when the delay started, before we went to the hotel, I thought we had calmed our nerves a little bit. They kind of got a chance to be around each other and realized we were just playing a baseball game regardless of the magnitude of it.

I felt like that was going to help us. Again, as these guys both said, I thought they have been good coming from behind, and I just felt we tried to speed it up a little bit and tried to do a little too much when we got our backs against the wall.

Q. What did you see from Poche', what was he able to do really well today on the mound?

MARK KRUEGER: He was able to keep the ball low. He located his fastball really well. His breaking ball had a lot of bite to it.

So I think he just located his pitches very well, and we sped up and tried to do too much with it.

Q. Did you think Danny had a little too much adrenaline? I know first pitch went to the back stop and things like that. Do you think he was over-amped a little bit?

ERIC MADSEN: Yeah, I think so. Danny's got good stuff, and I think obviously the environment got to him a little bit. He's done that before. I thought he settled down a little bit throughout the game; that he would, as

he has in the past.

I think again, the home run, I think it surprised him. He was just putting it on the plate and trying to see what results would come, and the guy got it good. So you know, again, good-hitting club, but definitely, I thought he let it get to him a little bit.

Q. Pitching plans for tomorrow?

ERIC MADSEN: Right now, most likely Jackson Cofer. He's been a great tournament guy for us. Again, still, that could change, but that's kind of what the talk was when we went into it. FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...