



2009 Phillips 66 Big 12 Baseball Championship Kansas State Press Conference Quotes Game 6 -- May 21, 2009 AT&T Bricktown Ballpark

Head Coach Brad Hill

Opening Statement:

"I think more than anything else A.J. (Morris) competed outstanding tonight. It was just one of those things where he just battled and battled and worked himself through the seventh inning. He had his pitch count up pretty good and like I said, he just kept competing for us.

"I thought we had some big at-bats too. Obviously, we had some big hits in crucial situations. [Justin Bloxom] gets us going in the first with a base hit up the middle. We took advantage of the mistake they made in the one inning on the bunt play and that helped us out obviously, getting a couple of runs there and King with a triple to right and those two runs. And then just to tack on those last two, to tack on the sac fly, just to get that run. Then the big homerun there, those always are so important to just tack on those ones at the back end of a game, just kind of takes away some of the momentum from the other team and again kind of deflates them a little bit. Obviously, props go out to our relief staff. Evan (Marshall) goes out and does what he does best."

On his team's improvements in recent weeks:

"It's hard to tell. Obviously there have been a number of things the last couple of weeks, and we haven't played very well, but at the same time, these are some pretty good teams we're playing too. Texas Tech is a very good team; Kansas is a very good team. Like I said, there are no weekends off in the Big 12. Everybody is good. So that's just one of those things, like I said, but it is nice to be back. I feel like we're playing a little more confident and comfortable with ourselves. I think that's probably the biggest difference more than anything else."

On playing Texas on Saturday with a chance to advance to the championship game:

"They're playing good baseball. Their pitching staff is outstanding. That's the big thing you have to look at is their arms, and they swung the bats extremely well today, and they swung the bats actually pretty good yesterday. They did that last year too. They got hot in the tournament and swung the bats really well so it will be a big challenge on Saturday from both sides of it."

Junior pitcher A.J. Morris

On having a 2-0 lead when he took the mound:

"It's always nice to get a little lead, a little comfort zone. The offense picked me up really well tonight. They made it easier. Whenever you have a bigger lead you can try and get aggressive with the fastball and not try to resort to the off-speed stuff as much."

On Kansas State being in an underdog role:

"Because we're still K-State and people still associate that with being weak...so we always come out and play like we have something to prove. Right now we are just trying to play as hard as we can, out-hustle everybody and leave it all out on the field."

Junior infielder Justin Bloxom

On his homerun in the top of the ninth:

"I just made contact, put my head down and started running. I never really look up at them; I just kind of run."

On comparing this season with the 2008 season:

"I don't know about different. We have a lot more confidence coming in here right now with our record and how well we've been playing. Like Coach said, we've been playing a lot of good teams and we've been trying to hold our own against them. It feels good to pull out a win today."



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Head Coach Steve Smith

Opening Statement:

"I thought it was a hard-fought game by both sides. Both teams played hard. Both sets of hitters competed hard. It wasn't necessarily a well-played ball game, but they out-hit us enough to win. Yesterday we hit enough to cover our mistakes, and tonight they hit enough to cover theirs."

On Kansas State going up 2-0 in the top of the first inning:

"It's still very early in the game. You have to give them credit -- they put the ball in play, but those runs are timely. I didn't feel badly about the way Willie (Kempf) was throwing, and I think he showed that after with his pitches. The thing that really hurt him was the bunt play. It turned from a 3-1 game to a 5-1 game, and I feel bad for him. He's out there competing his tail off, and he feels worse than anyone about it. I was proud that he got through the inning. We did the big things but we didn't do the little things offensively."

Junior pitcher Aaron Miller

On tonight's loss to Kansas State:

"I think our whole team felt that we could still get the win all the way up to the ninth inning up until the last out. We hit some balls hard today and had some good at bats against him. As long as we still had outs left to play with, we still had a chance to get back into the game. So I just went out there trying to get every out I could without giving up anymore runs to keep the game as close as I could."

Junior infielder Shaver Hansen

On the team's mindset today facing A.J. Morris:

"Coming from a game like yesterday, we swung the bats pretty well. Carrying over today as far as our approach goes, we knew who was pitching, and we knew we had to do our best up there. We couldn't quite get things done that needed to be done in this situation. He pitched well. It might not have been his best game, but he had his stuff. Those fast balls and free bases we got we took advantage of, but they made some diving catches in the outfield and made every defensive play. They're a good team, and they were better today, but I thought we competed well."

On staying focused and keeping confidence throughout the game:

"As long as there is an inning left we had to keep competing. And to get the bases loaded with no outs and our Nos. 3 and 4 hitters coming up is always a good situation for us. We managed to score those runs even though we didn't get a hit, and that's important. When Morris is up there, you're going to give it your best, and he knows that. He's the Big 12 Pitcher of the Year and you have to give him credit for that. We competed well against him whether he did or didn't have it tonight. Our hitters and pitcher did the best they could, but we just had some errors, and that hurt us."