

College World Series

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Omaha, Nebraska



Jim Schlossnagle

Brian Howard

Ryan Burnett

Luken Baker

TCU

TCU - 6, Coastal Carolina - 1

THE MODERATOR: Coach Schlossnagle, an opening statement.

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: Excited about the win. First time that we've been able to come up here and win the first two games. So certainly grateful for that.

I thought that the story of the game -- I thought Brian really battled. We took advantage of some free bases that they gave us, several free bases there in I guess the fifth inning. We had opportunities in both the fifth and sixth to blow that game open and didn't really put a good swing on much at all. But scored just enough.

And then I thought Ryan Burnett is certainly the story of the game, to come in there, having not pitched all that much, and certainly haven't pitched that length that he gave us out of the bullpen was outstanding, and it's really -- right now we're four for four in the two games on the guy that comes out of the bullpen getting the first guy out. And that's important in any baseball game, but it's really important here especially with great offenses like Tech and Coastal Carolina has to be able to stop innings. Ryan has done that twice in two games, and Trieglaff and Feltman both got the lead-off hitter out that they faced. Really proud of our bullpen, and looking forward to a day off tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. You had a visit from Micah today. What did that mean to each of you, just seeing him today, and what did that give you going into this game?

LUKEN BAKER: It was great. At least I figured out that he was coming up a couple of days ago, and I was really excited about it, and saw he was there for our team meal before the game.

It was great getting to see him. And he had a big smile on his face. He was happy to be around. It was fun to

be around, and he was upbeat and he was in a really positive attitude.

RYAN BURNETT: Honestly, it was awesome, just him being there. Just puts a smile on your face. Lets you forget about everything. Just go out and play baseball, have fun.

BRIAN HOWARD: Like Ryan said, it makes the baseball game really easy to go out there and play because you see a kid like Micah who is one of the strongest humans I've ever met. When you see the smile on his face, it just makes it easy to smile yourself. And he puts you in a good mood immediately when you see him.

And he's just such a huge part of this team. We say it a lot, but it's hard to even give everyone outside of our program an idea of how much he really means to us.

Q. Ryan, it seemed like you were able to spot that fastball pretty well but to both sides. Was that as well as you think you've pitched all year?

RYAN BURNETT: Top three. I felt great out of the bullpen. I was doing my job. I kept going, kept executing my pitches. Had my changeup and curveball, it was there and wasn't there, but my fastball was definitely my go-to.

Q. Ryan, what's it feel like for you to finally contribute and on this kind of stage considering the injuries you've been through? What did you think you might get out of this year for yourself?

RYAN BURNETT: It feels awesome. I've been waiting two years on this. It's definitely a blessing. I'm honored. I worked my butt off this fall, this spring, just to get here once again. Because I haven't been able to travel the last two.

It's a blessing. I love it right now. It's a great time. It's awesome.

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: Can I say something to that. Just so proud of Ryan. The guy's been through two surgeries. He's pitching with a torn ACL. That will more than likely get fixed after the season. For him to hang around and gut it out, it's just an awesome testament to his character and strength. And just couldn't be more proud of him.

Q. Brian, for you, it seemed like you really had pretty good feel for that curveball once again this week. I know Coach Saarloos says it's maybe something you've been able to throw with more conviction here lately. What's the key for you to find that pitch and have so much success with it?

BRIAN HOWARD: Tonight I really had to have it because I didn't have my cutter working. But he's really kind of gotten on me about that in the last couple of weeks about how when I throw that pitch really, really good, I throw it hard and I'm not totally worried about whether or not it's going to be a strike. I'm just trying to throw my best breaking ball.

And that's something that he's really been working with me on in my bullpens. And in the past I had kind of a get-me-over breaking ball that we have done away with and have what he calls a banger.

Q. Luken and Brian, could you speak to what Ryan's been through the past years, as you've seen him go through that?

LUKEN BAKER: I haven't been around for it obviously. It's my first year. But I've heard and know what he's been through, especially earlier in year, whenever he tore his ACL and didn't know what he was going to do about it and decided to tough it out and pitch on it. And he's been awesome for us this year.

He's been efficient and he's come out and put games away just as well as anyone out of the bullpen. And I love watching him pitch. And I'm really excited that he's here being -- because the last two years he was a big part of the bullpen and got hurt both years and didn't get the opportunity.

So it's fun to watch him out here succeed.

BRIAN HOWARD: For me, I've been Ryan's roommate for three years now. And it was the first two years when we went to Omaha and he couldn't be there, it was really hard for me, because I would go back to the room and be so excited about a win, and Ryan was very excited for us, but you could tell he wanted to be out there so bad.

So for two years in a row, for us to make it to Omaha and for one of my closest friends at TCU not to be able to go with me, seeing what he did tonight and especially kind of saving me, which adds a little bit to it, but to be able to see him go out there and have the success he had against a lineup that's one of the best in the country, it was one of my favorite moments since I've been a part of this program to know what he's been through off the field with the injuries and then to watch him go out and have the success that he had tonight

and really keep that game and give us that win tonight.

And it was just a very, very exciting thing to watch and I couldn't be more proud of him.

Q. How can we not ask about that loop single? No, I'm just kidding. Talk about the home run in the second inning, what that was like for you to go off the field and what you saw and how that went for you?

LUKEN BAKER: We knew coming into the game that he would attack with fastballs, and I worked the last few days on staying through baseballs instead of pulling off like I did for a lot of the Texas A&M series. I got a fastball up and away that I could handle and put a good swing on it, and I was a little more excited than I have been for a few of the ones in the past because it was my first opposite field one, and it felt really good.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, could you expand a little bit on what Micah's visit meant for you all today?

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: I think it's just great to see him. I think it's the first time that we've seen him since we got some of the news. That hasn't been so great to hear. So it's just a joy to see him.

This is honestly the most energy I've seen him have over an extended period of time. He was full of himself all day. He was enjoying the attention, which he's more than deserved.

And it was just good to see him and have him around and be around the guys. And anything that brightens his day has just been awesome. So to see a smile on his face and see his mom. She was in a great mood.

It's just great. It's just great having him around.

Q. Coach, Evan made two really good throws from behind the plate to get Rems at second. What kind of defensive impact does he bring to the team in situations like that?

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: He's a better thrower than people give him credit for. And when we give him a chance as a pitching staff to throw somebody out, he's throwing them out. And he's really improved defensively over the course of this last year, which has been kind of the knock on him, if you were going to say in professional baseball.

But I think he's going to be the catcher on the U.S.A. national team this summer, which is a great honor. You don't get that if you can't catch. I've been a part of coaching that team twice. You're playing the Japanese and Cubans; you'll get exposed quick. He'll do a great

job as long as the pitcher gives him a chance. And that is huge. Because early on I think three of the first four innings, or at least three the first three innings, Howard put the first runner on base. It's hard to keep them down, especially a great offense like they have, if you keep doing that. So those were big outs.

Q. Coach, what did you think of Brian Howard's outing tonight? Has he just reached a new level in this postseason, or has he always had that?

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: A sign of a good pitcher is to win when you don't have your best stuff. He had his best stuff against Texas A&M and Arizona State I think before that. He didn't have his best stuff tonight. I thought he was wild in the strike zone. His fastball was kind of -- when he was trying to throw it away, he threw it in; when he was trying to throw it in, he threw it away. And against that club, you'll be out of the game quick.

His curveball was just enough to keep him off balance, and he made a few good pitches when he had to make pitches with guys on base. That's a sign of a good pitcher. Because everybody is going to win when you have your best stuff, and everybody is going to lose when you have your worst. When you're just okay, that separates the pitcher. That separates the good ones from the average ones.

Q. You mentioned this is the first time you won Game 2 up here in Omaha. Was that an emphasis this year, and what advantage did that give?

COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE: That's an interesting -- every year we come up here; we want to win them all. The advantage is you get some rest and you have a chance to play one game versus maybe somebody else has to play three.

So we're still going to be facing a good team. There's enough off days to where I know both of these teams have enough pitching to come back through it. And they're very good offensively. So we're not going to take anything for granted, but we're going to use the advantage of the rest and then be loaded back up here on Friday night.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.