

# 2022 College World Series

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

**Notre Dame Fighting Irish**

**Coach Link Jarrett**

**John Michael Bertrand**

**Jared Miller**

Press Conference



punch-out, and kind of held the sixth inning to one run for them.

And the two line drives that Brannigan -- he caught them. They were clearly hit hard. And the four-pitch walk, I don't know exactly what happened. It looked like he was on it. But had Findlay where we needed him. And that lineup had rolled itself back to the one left-handed hitter.

So it luckily fell in place for the bullpen, but the guys still have to go out and pitch. And they did. Our infield, if you go around the diamond, Brannigan made some nice plays. Prajzner solid, picked it up, drove it over there. Miller, the one play. And you were almost hoping that would stay as an out just so that that counted, I guess, I don't know, the play he made. And Putz plays at first base.

So there it was. It was fun for you and the fans and the country that watched to watch our team because I feel like when we're playing well, that's what we do. And I'm very proud of them to come into this atmosphere and perform for the first time that well-rounded of a game against clearly a phenomenal program/team, talented. I couldn't be happier with the guys.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk about you guys being underdogs throughout. But now you went 3-0 in Statesboro. Won in Tennessee. And won tonight. What kind of statement do you think you're making about Notre Dame? Do you think it's time for people to realize that Notre Dame is a pretty good team?**

JOHN MICHAEL BERTRAND: I think it all starts with the preparation. And what the coaching staff is able to do preparing us for, like we said before, the last hour as well as just like the finite details of the game.

It doesn't really matter to us if we're underdogs or projected to win. The message is to go 1-0. By any means go 1-0. I'm not sure if that really matters to us. It's more how we play and just being ready to play some baseball.

JARED MILLER: I think a lot of the kind of underdog story is we don't really feel that internally on the team. We know when we go out and we play good baseball that we can

Notre Dame - 7, Texas - 3

THE MODERATOR: Link, give us an overview.

LINK JARRETT: Clearly well-played game. Two great left-handed arms going at it. Both of them -- the stats, I think there was a third of an inning total that separated the two, 103.1 and 103.2. Very similar. Both guys in total control of what they're doing in the game, in every phase of the game. You could see the fielding abilities on the bunts. The similarities in what was going on, just unique to see those two type of guys go at it.

So you know you have, both sides a difficult task. We felt there were some things we'd have to do supplementing just pure driving the ball. I mean, you hope that that happens, but the stolen base, the hit and run, where Coetzee hit the ball in the left field. LaManna and -- I don't know who was on first, but with 3-2 count we ran LaManna, which I haven't done a lot, but you feel like you're going to get some strikes. Our guys clearly were seeing the ball pretty well. The little squeeze helped.

It was fun because I thought all the variety of our offense, which I've sat here and talked to you guys about, was on display today. There's a couple of balls that left the stadium. Bunting, some base running, and just some good, the two-out hit by Myers, that was a big one, and I could go on and on about some of the game-within-the-game stuff.

JM pitched great. We had it -- not saying we had it right where we wanted it, but we had it once he got deep enough in the game, we were hoping that maybe we could use a righty just to give Texas something different to look at.

And Rao was fine. He got the two strikeouts. I know we had the wild pitch on the ball up, but he did get the



play with anyone in the country.

We try not to pay too much attention to the outside noise, but you know you're going against very good teams every time you step out there. We know we need to play our kind of game and be confident about that.

**Q. Jared, you came out smoking since your injury, maybe hitting as well as you have at any point or for most of the season. How do you explain coming out so hot?**

JARED MILLER: I just think at this point in the season, kind of all the training you've done the whole entire year shows itself out on the field. I missed a little bit of time, but once I got back in there I turned into compete mode. When you get out there and there's all the fans and all the pressure, you kind of just zero in and just the pitcher and the ball and you. And you just want to find a barrel. And the atmosphere and the adrenaline usually helps out.

**Q. The other day, in talking with Coach Jarrett, he said you had to have your A game today. He mentioned several things that you need to improve upon from your last time out in Knoxville. Could you explain your performance today?**

JOHN MICHAEL BERTRAND: Yeah, I was able to go fastball to both sides of the plate, with a cutter into the righties, which wasn't called but it was enough to bring it back off the plate. That's a good lineup. They're coached very well. And there's a distinct difference in their approaches with two strikes versus not.

So being able to bury that slider, throw the curveball for strike, change-ups away, sinkers away, fastballs and cutters in, it was kind of the way I've been going all year. Just to get back to the basis and execute one pitch at a time.

**Q. John Michael, coming out here on the big stage, playing under these lights, how do you keep your adrenaline down, what prepared you for this kind of start tonight?**

JOHN MICHAEL BERTRAND: Just kind of having confidence through preparation. And so knowing that when you get out there that rubber is 60 feet, 6 inches away. You look down at it and you know it's not going to move and it's the same thing. You're just going out there taking it one pitch at a time.

You don't have to go win a whole game. You don't have to go pitch the whole game. You just have to win one pitch at a time and kind of focusing on that and minimizing it.

**Q. Jared, if you can, just describe to me the energy that John Michael brings both on and off the mound?**

JARED MILLER: Yeah, when JM takes the mound we feel really confident. We know he's going to pound the zone. That's good for us as defenders because we like making plays. When he's out there throwing strikes we play with that energy behind him. And he brings that on and off the field.

**Q. John Michael, could you take us through that play in the third inning when you fielded that bunt and decided to go to second base?**

JOHN MICHAEL BERTRAND: We practice this a lot. Coach Jarrett is really good at being able to start the clock on his little stopwatch. And from the moment that ball is hit to the moment that we throw it and deliver it, how long we have. And so usually going down the first base line we have about, under 4.3. And second base it's a little less because he's got a jump and he has a secondary.

I know that I can attack the ball really well and I get to the ball quickly. And being able to get that lead guy end up saving a run later, which was nice. But it's just kind of trusting that my guys are going to be there and trusting the athleticism to get off the mound and get to the ball quickly and make a decision.

**Q. You all seem to have them off balanced all night. This is the first time they haven't had an extra base hit in the whole season, 68 games. Considering how dangerous their lineup is, how did you think you pitched, particularly against Melendez and Stehly who just had a couple of singles?**

LINK JARRETT: From my vantage point, and this is the furthest I feel like I've ever been from the field because of the way the stadium is beautiful, it's just the design and you're kind of back. I almost have to see this again. You guys might have a better view if you were able to watch it on a monitor somehow.

He can really pitch to both sides of the plate. And when a pitcher can do that with a fastball alone, I mean, that's a lot to try to manage. And he's got some feel and he'll manipulate it based on what he senses with a particular hitter, how he looks in the box, the stride, like what it looks like to him.

So we're talking going to both sides of the plate. But like he told you, he'll almost run that thing a little further away if he thinks that's the answer.

So it's not just a fastball away. And then when he goes in, it's sometimes he can really four-seam it, like he said, and almost cut it in there a little bit. So just that by itself is pretty good.

And then the up fastball, Hansen did a nice job with the up fastball, probably did a better job than we did going up in the zone. And this is a stadium today you can throw up fastballs. You're not doing it in Knoxville, not if you want to throw the same ball again.

So that's where it starts. And then I've talked numerous times about he throws two breaking balls. And if I can't tell which is which from the dugout, that's not good. It needs to be a curveball and a slider.

And I think he had it tonight. I don't think he finished -- I didn't feel like he finished people off, maybe, with it, but it wasn't on the barrel a lot. And then the change-up, then that's a whole 'nother pitch. And that allows the fastball to be better because now there's something else that's not a breaking pitch that's hard to calibrate.

So those guys are good. There were a couple balls in center field, if we weren't here they would have had their extra base hits, to be honest with you. It's just different. The basketball court is the same size everywhere. The baseball field is not. And the elements affect it. This is a big park. The only place the ball was going out was over the right fielders head, like in that lane or to the line.

**Q. Just describe the energy in the dugout and how big it was to get that lead the second batter into the game and be able to carry the momentum and get the win here tonight and never give the lead up, just keep fighting to keep that lead?**

LINK JARRETT: Whenever you come out of the corners in the boxing match and you can land the first blow, it's really a good feeling. And that happened to us last Friday. And there were a bunch that night.

So it just gives you the momentum and the mojo, and when you're coaching the game with a lead, you're a little more risky -- I don't know if "risky" is the right word, but you have some options in terms of running yourself into an out, when you're up a little bit. It's a good feeling.

Like the playbook seems to open a little bit more. So that was huge.

And Miller, I didn't play him in the Regional because I was trying to get him right for the next weekend. Obviously I wasn't holding him back thinking that first game of the World Series, the 17th of June, I'm going to sit here on

June 4th.

But he's a really good player and that was neat. That was neat for him. It was huge for the team. So when the guys feel like, okay, one of our guys, like our captain, he's back, like that was right-handed, which was the hardest thing for him to recover in his game was his right-handed hitting.

So I think when you look at what we've dealt with without him, I think that kind of sent a message to our team that, man, Miller's, he's back.

**Q. When you thought about getting here for so long and worked so hard and then the moment suddenly arrives tonight, how important and valuable is it to have a roster full of graduate students, seniors, guys who have been around the block in a lot of different ways? How valuable is that when the moment comes?**

LINK JARRETT: Huge. I think the age of the players in college, the difference between an 18- or 19-year-old and a 22- or 23-year-old, in a lot of different ways, just the maturity, the physicality, then you get into the experience part, they know what we're trying to do.

So as they're older, like with LaManna at second base, if that's a freshman catcher in Omaha and we're going to run and he knows he's not a runner, like, there's no telling how that guy might respond. But I had no hesitation because of the age. It is such a difference.

They've been in crowds before, but I don't think we were fazed other than the ball in right-center field, the two guys, it's still hard to hear. They're trying to call it. The age is a huge piece. And we're probably seeing better college baseball because of the age factor once the COVID guys eventually works itself out and you're back to a little normal.

And the draft may eventually stretch back out a little bit. But this is probably the best college baseball we'll ever see because of the age of the guys, guys that -- how many of these guys probably in a normal year wouldn't be on a college team anymore. There's a lot. And they are. So you throw all that in the pot, it's pretty fun.

**Q. You understand that Hansen is not a hard thrower but you had so much hard contact against him tonight. Did you see that on film? And were you confident you were going to be able to square him up the way you did?**

LINK JARRETT: You know the profile of the pitches going in. But you can look at all the video and read the metrics all you want. It's still sometimes, how well, when you're in

the batter's box, you can pick up what's going on.

Sometimes guys hide the ball really well. And sometimes there's just something that's going on that you can't quite calibrate. And until you get in there, you don't know. Our guys do a great job. They come back and they tell the next guy, here's what it looked like; here's the fastball. It's straight. It's got a little ride but it's straight. You can see the slider.

They do a good job force feeding the information to the guys as they go up to the plate. And that's what they do.

Now, we've worked to cultivate that, but he's really good. And he ran into a group of guys tonight that had it locked in, and we spent a lot of time -- Rich and Chuck and Brad -- on preparing those guys.

When you look at the video, like we did, we keep it at 20 minutes. Scouting report, 20 minutes, Chuck, Rich, me, we divide it up. But that video, I felt like we knew what we were getting. And I would say Texas probably knew what they were getting.

Until you step out there in the box and see some pitches, it's still hard to figure out exactly how it's going to play. But our guys did it, on it, good.

**Q. After such an emotional win in Knoxville, how do you ride the wave with an experienced team in terms of making it to Omaha?**

LINK JARRETT: Stay out of their way. Just let them go. That's the beauty of it. Like, let them go.

I'm just going to tell you this, and I was thinking it during the game, it was almost as relaxed as I've been coaching a game. And that's easy to say, and I know part of it.

The biggest part was because the game played out like we were hoping. If this thing goes sideways in a hurry, I'm sure I wouldn't have been.

But you just kind of let them go a little bit. And there's a time you might have to change things that you're trying to do or how you approach them. But my gut was this is not the time. There was no crazy message before the game. You just sometimes have to know when to let them go play.

**Q. We talk about your veterans. But Jack Findlay, we're going to ask about him again. When did you see this -- whether it was the fall or winter, or the same thing I asked your players, you're now 6-1 in the postseason, maybe the only team in college baseball**

**with wins over Texas and Tennessee. What kind of statement do you continue to make about Notre Dame baseball?**

LINK JARRETT: Well, I think the statement is made by everybody else because I think we feel like we've done this for the better part of two seasons. Until you do it on a stage nationally, it's kind of hard for the statement to be.

I'm not making the statement. I'm not going to go tell people I think our team's good. You just have to go play well and eventually people will say, you guys are pretty good.

There wasn't really a statement there. To think you're sitting there, the first game, you're going through it and you're starting to count outs and where the lineup is and where the lefty is, you're like, if we could just get to that freshman lefty that's never pitched in relief in his life, we'll be just fine.

So he's just poised and more competitive. He's so poised that there's some guys in fall or preseason practice you can almost see. Ryan McLinskey, you knew this guy is out there. He punches himself in the face. He's dialed in. It's high fastballs and power sliders and he's pumping his fist.

Findlay would just go out there, and he just pitched. You can't gauge the competitiveness until you see pitching competitively in high stakes situations. And it looks better than it did when we were in Loftus and we were in the fall and we're pitching; he's just throwing fastballs. It's pretty good but there's not -- it's 90, 91, 88, 90 -- it's not 95.

He's just poised. And like I talked about the other, like Texas' pitcher, Findlay's fastball is hard to wrap your mind around it, some of them go that way, to that side, and some of them -- it's just a tough thing, and clearly he's been very, very precise with what he's doing.

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