

#7 Louisville vs. Illinois State
Louisville Postgame Quotes
NCAA Baseball Tournament – Louisville Regional
Jim Patterson Stadium
June 3, 2019

(Opening Statement)

Holm: “Obviously not the outcome we were looking for, but at the end of the day, a bloop for them or a bloop for us could’ve changed the whole thing. But, I can’t be more proud of this group and what they accomplished in one calendar year. It’s pretty amazing. We’d like to thank all of our seniors and some of our juniors that will move on from everything that they did for us and the program this year.”

(Colton, you hadn’t pitched nearly that long all this season, how were you able to pitch that long and that effectively against a team like that?)

Johnson: “All year coach Holm’s called me a 70s/80s style closer, where I’m just another starter – I can go four or five innings. I’ve had to do that after Matt before. It was no surprise that my name was getting called, I mean, I have it in me so it was no surprise. I have the ability and that’s what I was going to do.

(Colton, you had some struggles this year, did you adjust anything today?)

Johnson: “For the past month, I’ve struggled a little bit. Usually, I come out after Headrick on a Friday, and I struggled a little bit mechanically – and then I’ll come out Sunday and I’ll do a bit better. With me coming out in the first game of this regional and I struggled a little bit, I wasn’t surprised that I was going to pitch better today.”

(Derrick, you as a fifth year senior, can you describe what this season and this weekend in this tournament has meant to you?)

Parola: “I’m trying not to get too emotional, but this year was obviously something out of storybook for us. The first three years I can rewind it, I think we won around a combined 55 games. I mean this year completely flip flopped. I’m just so proud of the way this program is going. The work that was put in this year has set a foundation for the upcoming year, and I’m looking forward to the way this program can move forward.”

(Derek, after Louisville won fairly handily yesterday, was there still confidence that you guys can come back and play the type of game you did today and really test them?)

Derek: “Yeah, I think a lot of guys were pretty visibly upset after the game yesterday just to see our performance. Actually we were sitting in the back of the bus and I get a text from Coach Colton saying, ‘would you bring a speaker in the bus, it’s dead silent.’ He says, ‘hey, turn on some music,’ and I was like what. Sure enough, I told my buddy who’s kind of like the class clown of our team, he turns it on out of nowhere, ‘Don’t Stop Believing’. That song was blasting on the speaker. Everyone gets into it and starts singing and that kind of reversed the attitude that we had yesterday. After that loss, we needed to come out and compete the way we did.”

(In your wildest dreams, could you expect more out of Colton [Johnson] today?)

Holm: "If our team would have been constructed a little bit differently, I think Colton would have been our number two starter. I've always felt that it's detrimental to a team and the team's psyche to lose games late. There's no secret that last year's pitching staff had a 6.40 ERA, so when we came in, we decided there were ways that we were not going to lose late. If your starter gives you a good start, you have to be able to hold onto that. So that required us to put Colton in the back of the game, and that's basically what we referred to as that '1985 Lee Smith-style save.' So no, it didn't surprise me. We had started him at Central Arkansas and he went six innings down there and that was a four-game series. We also started him against Iowa and that was a game we knew we had to win RPI-wise. We had just come off a pretty tough losing streak out there at Creighton. We ran him out there, I think he gave us four [innings] that day and we knew we had the weekend coming up and we just rolled the dice and thought that game was going to be very meaningful for us down the road RPI-wise. We did have faith. I did not look at the pitch count. It says here that he went to 105, which I told you was my number yesterday, so I got lucky with that one. It was going to be ride-or-die with him. I thought that he was our best option and I knew you could beat that club with left-handed arms and he obviously showed you could do that. Matt Walker did it, and he threw a very, very similar performance to Matt Walker. We just couldn't get those balls to fall for us offensively."

(Your first season as coach, some pretty positive happenings.)

Holm: "Yeah, I definitely think the culture was changed. The guys, we asked more of them than they probably wanted to give for a while, which was fun for us, but not for them at that point, especially in the fall when they got to know the stairs in the football stadium very, very well. We did say we would be in a regional. I did not say we would win the regional, so I guess I was right on that one, too. It got awfully close. I was really pulling for them. At this point, they did everything from the second half [of the season] on. We guided them and got them to believe in themselves and everything like that."