

# Illinois State vs. Indiana

## NCAA Louisville Regional | May 31, 2019

### Indiana Postgame Quotes

#### Head Coach Jeff Mercer (Opening Statement)

"We played a terrific game, they did a really good job. They were well-coached and we did a good job, tough, really tough offensively they did a good job had a great identity – stayed really simple, especially with two strikes. They really punished mistakes, balls were left over the plate and they took advantage of some of our miscues defensively but they did a really good job. They outplayed us. They were terrific."

#### (Pauly [Milto] had tough go of it today. What was wrong with him?)

"Yeah, I thought his stuff was really good. His velocity was obviously, he was sharp. It was 90, 92 for the better part of the first two innings. He's just up over the plate. Pauly's good when his stuff is able to work to the edges and work down and allow his sink to play and locating breaking balls. It's emotions. You run hot, you run high, and we just made mistakes over the plate. Against them, they're probably the best fastest ball-hitting team we've played against all year. Them and Indiana State, who is in the same conference. The pitches were over the plate and when the stuff's not good enough. There's very few select guys who were good enough to be able to leave over the middle of the plate, elevated, and not get touched up. They put balls in play and they made us pay. And we didn't help them, either. The emotions of the moment overcame us, and here you look at, we have a ball in right field, we singled them, we throw the ball to third base, allow the backside guy to advance the guy on first and second. Then they get a sac bunt down, hit a fly ball to left center, our centerfielder throws a ball to third base. No player of being out, both guys advance. Next guy hits a one-hopper, the shortstop, it's not played well, the inning would've been over, and they don't score two runs. While Pauly wasn't crisp early, we didn't do a lot to help keep the plays in order, which you have to against teams like this. And then he settled down. He settled down, did a fine job through three or four innings where he was able to get back to being himself. Get the ball down and keep it out of the middle, and they weren't able to do as much damage there, and it wasn't for a lack of stuff. His stuff was good, just lack of execution."

#### (Talking about the at-bats, not just the struggles early, what wasn't taking in terms of guys trying to adjust as the game went on in your mind?)

"In my mind, it really comes down to... I'm not sure if there's a better word for this, but we acted like we panicked for about five innings. And you have to be able to be emotionally stable in moments that are heightened. And maybe that's not the right word, but we tried to do way too much. We tried to take individual at-bats in a very team-oriented game, and tried to overwhelm the game individually. And that's just not how it works. You have to be able to work at-bats together over the course of time. You have to be able to have a unified approach and a unified mindset to be able to attack a guy. Especially a guy that has good stuff, and we're predominantly left-handed, so it's going to be a tougher matchup to begin with. I felt like the game plan going into it was on point. He did what he thought he was going to do. He has a good arm and had good stuff. And then you saw us be able to settle back down there in the middle of the fifth, sixth inning. And we got control of our emotions and went together and had bases loaded in the sixth and didn't score, and put together a good inning in the seventh. But it's just too late. You have to be able to be emotionally stable and control what you can control from the beginning of the game. And certainly that rests on my shoulders. The inability for me to be able to have them in a position mentally to go out and do those things. The game's hard. I understand that. I played this game. All of our staff played this game. We've played it at a high level. I understand the difficulties of being able to manage big moments in situations that present themselves throughout the course of the game. But if you're unable to make adjustments, fail to follow the basic rudimentary plan, it becomes almost impossible to have success outside of someone giving you opportunities and they weren't going to give us opportunities. They took care of the ball and threw strikes. So, we just didn't do a good enough job at that, and obviously that's my responsibility to make sure we're in a mental place to be tougher. To be tougher and more competitive, and try to fight the game and not fight the opponent. Try to fight the game plan and not fight the surroundings or anything that goes along with it."

#### (Jeremy Houston entered the game as a defensive sub, but he had a big at bat late in the game. It was his third at bat since April 5, but he manages to come through in the clutch for you guys, and get the rally going. What does that say about him and the other guys on the bench as far as their readiness, as well as just him as an individual?)

"We actually talked about Jeremy the last couple days. He's worked tremendously hard. He's been such a great kid through not being an everyday guy the last couple months. But he's worked tremendously hard in the cages. Every day he comes in and puts his time in and we had talked about how much he had improved over the course of the spring. If there was a moment where we felt comfortable with getting him in there, both from a defensive standpoint and offensively. And he came up big with a really big at-bat there, which he had two strikes, but he battled his way through it. He was so composed and very confident, and he just did a really

nice job. It really goes back to the work you put in, you're confident in the work you put in, or you struggle, because you don't believe in what you've done daily. And Jeremy's put in enough work to be confident in that moment, and we believed in him, because we've watched him do it."

**(Is there any update on Matt [Gorski] beyond he had the cast on his hand?)**

"The only update I got is they think it's a muscle or a sprain, not necessarily anything more severe than that. Matt would've stayed in the game if I had let him, to be honest with you. And it was my decision. I just didn't feel like if his hand was strong enough to secure the glove the way we needed to, it wasn't going to be strong enough to secure the ball. And, if he's not going to be able to hit then we've got to get him out of there, because a line drive at him, he's not able to take care of it or a ball in the gap. And secondarily, our trainer is terrific, he's a star, but you don't want to do anything if there's a hairline fracture in there that's going to make it worse. But as far as I know there's not, so hopefully we'll get a chance to see tomorrow what he's capable of doing."

**Indiana Player Quotes**

**(On their offense)**

**#30 Scotty Bradley, 1B**

"I think a lot of it was just us getting ourselves out, having bad at-bats, really having no approach, no mindset going into the box, really just kind of flailing at the ball and obviously it bit us in the butt at the end."

**(Is this the same thing that's been going on in the postseason, it's been rough for you guys...you guys did pretty well this regular season but here in postseason things have kind of gone sideways hitting wise.)**

**#21 Elijah Dunham, LF**

"Lately we haven't been hitting that good. I think fundamentally it comes down to our players' confidence. I feel like a lot of guys are just not confident in the box right now and it kind of looks like they're just giving up on the bats and it looks like they're just trying not to strike out – which is not the mentality you want to have at the plate. Some of our teammates are just hitting like a bunch of babies and it's really frustrating."

**(Elijah, you got the first inning home-run, did you get a sense that their starters made any adjustments after that?)**

**#21 Elijah Dunham, LF**

"From all my at-bats off him, I don't think he made any adjustments. I think he did what we were told he was going to do by our coaches, and I think he stayed with that the whole game. It was just us chasing pitches that got us out and again, just not being confident at the plate. If we would have just stuck to the game plan our coaches told us in the beginning, I think we would've had a lot more success."

**(Was chasing pitches also the issue at the end with Dalton Harvey?)**

**#21 Elijah Dunham, LF**

"Chasing pitches is what everyone sees but, fundamentally comes down to the confidence of our guys in the box right now. I don't know why our guys are so not confident, I feel like our coaches give us no reason not to be confident, we have all the support we absolutely need so, in my personal opinion, it comes down to a leadership and internal issue that we will have to fix by tomorrow."

**(How tough is it to see a teammate like Matt [Gorski] go down?)**

**#30 Scotty Bradley, 1B**

"Really tough, Matt's obviously one of the more talented guys we have. The kid busts his butt every single day, it was really tough to see him go down but, it's the next man up. Sam Crail comes in and I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but as a collective group we need to pick it up because this season is on the line from every game now at this point, so we need to get it going."