

#7 Louisville vs. Illinois State
Louisville Postgame Quotes
NCAA Baseball Tournament – Louisville Regional
Jim Patterson Stadium
June 2, 2019

(Opening Statement)

McDonnell: "We knew it was going to be a long day, but it was a fun day. Really proud of these guys. We needed to get the bats going, we got the bats going. And obviously, this guy to my right, that was fun to watch. It was fun from the dugout. I'm assuming it was fun to watch from the seats, from the press box. We needed it. We needed it in a big way today, and in this stage of the regionals. So, just happy for these guys."

(On when he found a groove in the game)

Smith: "I think after the third inning, I started to get a feeling for my pitches. Having Zeke behind the plate helped me stay cool and calm even when I wasn't throwing strikes like I wanted to. That was a real big help for me."

(On if he wanted to finish the game)

Smith: "I wanted it. I'm not going to say I didn't. But I appreciate Coach Mac giving me that applause. That was really cool."

(On pitching deep into the game)

Smith: "Yeah, the adrenaline was going, and the fans were a big part. That 'Luke' chant was something I had never heard before. That was really cool. I wasn't ever sore or anything. The adrenaline kept me going. And I felt good the whole night."

(On what powered him to his first home run of the season)

Snider: "I think I've been pretty locked in for the last couple of weeks. Been hitting the ball hard, just not a lot to show for it. All the times, that's just how the game kind of goes. Just kind of what you make of it. Can't get too low when you know your technique good."

(On the team's offensive performance)

Snider: "The offense came through in a big way tonight, but I think Luke...I don't want to say he really struggled, but a couple guys got on, and he got out of the jam every single time. I could really feel that the dugout and the offense were feeding off that energy."

(On carrying offensive momentum from the first game into the second)

Snider: "Yeah, we all felt really confident. First game was going well, and then the second game, kind of the same thing."

(On his first home run of the season)

Smith: "I mean, that's good. I think it really got the momentum going. Obviously, (junior left-hander) Adam Elliott, you could hear them the entire time. And then, it just got louder and louder. I think that kind of got the momentum going."

(On his mindset entering the start)

Smith: "My mindset coming in was just to give it my best and go as long as I could. Coach (Roger) Williams is a great guy calling pitches and I agreed with everything he had tonight. It just worked in my favor."

(On showing emotion on the mound)

Smith: "Yeah, I tend to think of myself as a pitcher that pitches with a lot of emotion. Like I said, the crowd tonight got me a little extra amped up. But, I think pitching with emotion, like Jake said, can help trigger an offensive outbreak. I try to do as much as I can."

(On hearing the crowd chant his name)

Smith: "It was cool, man. I'm usually a guy that tries to block out the crowd noise. But, I took a step back and listened to it for a second. It was a cool experience having that many people saying your name. At first, I thought it was boos, because I came in the dugout and I thought that somebody came out, I don't know. And then, someone said 'Dude, they're saying your name'. Kind of a cool thing."

(On the talent of the pitching staff)

Smith: "We like to think that we're the best pitching staff in the country. We have a lot of guys we put out that we're confident in. Whether it's a starter, a reliever, whoever comes out of the bullpen, we feel real good about it. I think that has a lot to say with Coach Williams. He gets us ready, and Coach Farrel as well. Kills us in the weight room, we're ready to perform every day, and today was a good day."

(On the team's mindset entering Monday's game)

Snider: "At the end of the day, we're kind of fighting for our life. And I don't think that as a team, that really hinders us at all. It just motivates us and makes us want to play harder, and better."

(On when he last threw 100+ pitches)

Smith: "I can't even tell you that. Junior college, I threw upwards of 100 pitches a couple of times, but I think this is the most I've ever thrown. I felt good the whole time. I asked (junior left-hander) Nick Bennett, who was doing the pitching chart, after the game, how many I threw and he said 129, but I really didn't feel that at all. I guess this is the first time."

(On if he is available for Monday's game)

Smith: "Absolutely."

(On Smith's performance)

McDonnell: "Yeah, guys got to step up. The good thing about going with Luke is he's had experience starting. When you start mid-week games for us, those are big games, you're facing good opponents and every game matters. Guys talked about it earlier, we play every game as if it's a postseason game. Felt like he could give us a quality start, but we knew he needed the offense to get it going and you got to score runs. It's hard to win low scoring games at this time of the year. Hitters are so locked in, but great team effort all the way around."

(On the energy of the team and crowd following the Indiana game)

McDonnell: "Yeah, I think we definitely use the word 'edge.' We use that a lot in our program—just about the way we play, the way we go at it. We're a pretty emotional team, you see our pitchers. Sometimes, emotion can get the best of you too, but this is college baseball. That's what makes it so much fun. They take a lot of pride in this. They've worked hard for this. As I said in the in-game interview, 'The bar is set very high here,' from the time we recruit them to the time they show up. So, we want them to enjoy this. They've put a lot of work into this."

(On the advantage of only using one bullpen pitcher)

McDonnell: "We had to play the extra game, of course, so I think we needed that in a big way. Tomorrow's one of those games, all hands on deck, and you love to see the look in these pitcher's eyes. They've been kind of chirping all day about 'Who's ready tomorrow?' And they all want the ball, that's what's fun. You got these guys that want the baseball tomorrow so I'm sure Coach Williams will do a great job."

(On Snider's offensive performance)

McDonnell: "Yeah, they're good hitters, we wouldn't be in this spot. We got a really good offense. I like to say we fill up the stat sheet in a lot of categories. But, it's contagious and sometimes you get a little stale. The guy in front of you is not hitting, then you're not hitting and we just wanted to change it up with the speed guys, and give it a different look and try to do some different things with bunts or the hit-and-runs, who's stealing, and it just worked out. For me it's 'Don't be afraid.' I remember texting Joe Maddon a couple years ago, I had some lineup questions and he's so bold. He just kept saying 'Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to make changes in the lineup. It doesn't matter what time of the year it is.' And I talked about it with the hitters, I gave them a heads-up before I posted it in the dugout. Just gave them the heads-up as to why we're just changing it up a little bit and they responded."

(On Snider's home run waking up the offense)

McDonnell: "Yeah, no doubt. They're calling him 'Postseason Jake' because he's had a few of these and that's what you need. Every team at every level, you got to have guys that get hot in the postseason. And fortunately we've got a good lineup, we've got some depth, brought in Zach Britton off the bench today, because he's usually in the lineup so I said it all year 'our depth is big' and so whether it's the position players or the pitching staff, it showed today and hopefully it shows tomorrow."

(On the defensive performance of junior outfielder Drew Campbell)

McDonnell: "I've been giving Coach (Adam) Vrable a hard time because Drew Campbell robbed a home run down in Florida against UConn. That was an unbelievable catch. He does those drills every week, and I give him a hard time because he's hitting balls over the fence, and I've been like, 'Man, when are we going to rob a home run.' I just see him doing the drill every week, almost every day at practice to a degree. He was probably most happy. He was like a kid in a candy store running around after Drew caught that one. He almost robbed another one. It looked like he was pretty close to the other one in center."

(On the importance of pitching depth)

McDonnell: "At all levels, what's the saying? You never have enough pitching. You kind of learn that at a young age at all levels. What's the biggest need in the big leagues right now? Starting pitching. That's just the nature of the game. It's good depth. Our depth and our talent, they push each other. Young guys learn from the older guys. I get excited just to see (freshman left-hander) Carter Lohman run out there. That's a talented left-handed pitcher, young guy, who the future will be here before we know it."

(On considering leaving Smith in to finish a complete game)

McDonnell: "We wanted him to start the inning just because his velocity was up. He looked good. Obviously, the dropped fly ball, we lost it in the twilight there, and it just felt like, 'OK, let's let him get one more.' But, at that point, it's kind of like a guy giving up a hit when you're throwing a no-hitter in the ninth and you're not going to leave him out there anymore. So, after that, we just felt like we had a guy in the bullpen ready to go. Like I told him, it would be great to pitch a complete game, but sometimes, it's really cool to walk off to a standing ovation. I'm glad he got to experience that."

(On managing the pitching staff in Monday's game)

McDonnell: "We've been here before. Our first year in '07, Coach (Roger) Williams, he lines them up. Every day, those guys throw in the outfield. Every day, they come up to him [and say] 'I'm good' or 'I'm a little sore, I'm a little tired.' Today was one of those days where you could see guys were buzzing. Guys kept coming up to him [saying] 'Coach, I'm good. I'm ready.' And that's why you work so hard all year, and they gave Zach Farrel, our strength coach, a lot of credit—Pat Hassell, our

trainer—we've got a lot of hands helping these kids. So, they're strong and they're healthy, and Coach Williams does a phenomenal job with the health of these kids, never over-pitches them, never pitches them two days in a row. So, when you get to a time like this, this is probably the weekend where you can push the envelope a little bit because these guys have had plenty of rest between outings all year."

(On the team carrying its 'edge' into Monday's game)

McDonnell: "No doubt. That's who we are. We're going to play with that edge whether it's February or June."

(On the starting pitcher for Monday's game)

McDonnell: "No, I don't know who's going to start just yet. I'll talk to Coach Williams, but I can tell you every pitcher is going to want an opportunity to get the ball tomorrow."